

# LITTELL'S LIVING AGE.

Fifth Series, }  
Volume LXXIX. }

No. 2506. — July 9, 1892.

{ From Beginning,  
Vol. CXCIV. }

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PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY BY  
**LITTELL & CO., BOSTON.**

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## EVENING.

DIM falls the light o'er all the dreaming  
woods;

Athwart the distant western sky are gleams  
Of gold and amber; pearly rose-edged clouds;  
Looking so passing fair, one almost dreams.

The opening gate of Paradise hath lent  
Some tinge of glory to the dying day;  
And earth-bound souls, with longing, ling'ring  
gaze,  
Would fain rise up and move along that  
way.

A stillness sweet and solemn all around;  
The song of birds is hushed; there falls no  
quiver  
Of rustling leaf, or shaken trembling reed,  
Upon the fair faint brightness of the river.

The crescent moon gleams coldly, dimly,  
forth;  
And in the deep'ning blue of heaven, afar,  
A tender watcher o'er the troubled world,  
Shineth one solitary glitt'ring star.

The shadows deepen on the distant hills;  
The highest peaks but touched with ling'ring  
light;  
And down their purpling sides, soft misty  
clouds  
Wrap all the valleys in a dusky night.

And far away the murmur of the sea,  
And moonlit waves breaking in foamy line.  
So Night — God's Angel, Night — with silvery  
wings,  
Fills all the earth with loveliness divine.  
Chambers' Journal. GRAHAM.

## A LONDON ROSE.

DIANA, take this London rose,  
Of crimson grace for your pale hand,  
Who love all loveliness that grows:  
A London rose — ah, no one knows,  
A penny bought it in the Strand!

But not alone for heart's delight;  
The red has yet a deeper stain  
For your kind eyes that, late by night,  
Grew sad at London's motley sight  
Beneath the gaslit driving rain.

And now again I fear you start  
To find that sorry comedy  
Re-written on a rose's heart:  
'Tis yours alone to read apart,  
Who have such eyes to weep and see.

Soon rose and rhyme must die forgot,  
But this, Diana — ah, who knows! —  
May die, yet live on in your thought  
Of London's fate, and his who bought  
For love of you a London rose.  
Macmillan's Magazine. ERNEST RHYS.

## A BACHELOR'S BALLADE.

THEY haunt me at "drums" and at dances,  
They hunt me wherever I hic,  
Cold Clara, and frolicsome Frances,  
Mild Mary, and volatile Vi:  
Blue, brown, grey, and hazel-hued eye  
My rent-roll all lovingly scan,  
What care I? for "cast is the die,"  
I am not a "marrying man."

The spell of those eloquent glances,  
The charm of that murmured reply,  
The skill of those subtle advances,  
I do not attempt to deny;  
Yet harmless their arrows fly by,  
And vainly they plot and they plan;  
I'm young, and I'm wealthy, but I —  
I am not a "marrying man."

If callousness value enhances,  
Most tempting of baits I supply.  
Oh, mine is the feeblest of chances,  
Yet still on my vow I'll rely:  
Let match-making mothers come try  
Their arts and ensnare me who can!  
The body of them I defy,  
I am not a "marrying man."

## ENVOY.

Dan Cupid, your fetters I fly,  
Yet cannot escape from your ban;  
Cruel Laura Trefusis knows *why*  
I am not a "marrying man."

Temple Bar.

MOTHER, I cannot mind my wheel;  
My fingers ache; my lips are dry.  
Oh! if you felt the pain I feel —  
But oh! who ever felt as I?  
No longer could I doubt him true.  
All other men may use deceit;  
He always said my eyes were blue,  
And often swore my lips were sweet.

Various the roads of life — in one  
All terminate — one lonely way  
We go, and "Is he gone?"  
Is all our best friends say.

How many voices gaily sing,  
O happy morn! — O happy spring  
Of life! Meanwhile there comes o'er me  
A softer voice from memory,  
And says, "If loves and hopes have flown  
With years — think, too, what griefs are  
gone."

Mild is the parting year, and sweet  
The odors of the falling spring.  
Life passes on more rudely fleet,  
And balmless is its closing day.  
I wait its close, I court its gloom,  
But mourn that there must never fall,  
Or on my breast or on my tomb,  
The tear that would have sooth'd it all.

W. S. LANDOR.

From The Quarterly Review.

THE FRENCH DECADENCE.\*

No reader of Balzac will have forgotten the old curiosity shop to which, in the opening pages of "*La Peau de Chagrin*," Raphaël de Valentin, the ruined man of genius, pays a desperate visit. Raphaël has made up his mind that at nightfall he will fling himself over the Pont Royal into the Seine. But meanwhile he wanders listlessly along the streets; loiters in front of shop-windows; remarks the air and features of a lady making purchases within; and at last, stumbling against the entrance of the bric-à-brac merchant's, makes a voyage of exploration among his treasures. It is a house of many stories, full to overflowing. The young man looks upon all the strange, beautiful, and costly things which have been swept up from the graves of fifty generations,—the panorama, so life-like yet so phantasmal, of ages that have vanished; their artistic leavings in bronze, marble, ivory, steel, and gold; the colors and shapes in which they took delight; the vestures of all hues and tissues wherewith they girt their beauty round about; the gods which they worshipped; the amulets, seals, and talismans wherein they sought protection against evil and the unknown. And the poet's imagination—for he is of that sensitive race—already troubled, becomes yet more chaotic, lending to these dead things a factitious and uncertain life. They glare at him with uncanny vision; they move and throb as with an awakening pulse; they seem to promise and over-power in the same moment. Then, like a figure out of some ghostly world, the owner of these marvels comes upon the scene. He listens in a sarcastic, slightly cynical mood to Raphaël's story; offers him, but at the youth's own risk, that formidable and victorious talisman of the wild ass's skin; and when he snatches it eagerly,

says to him, with less pity than disdain: "What, you had already resolved to die? Your suicide is but delayed." The rest of the story tells how his words came true.

It is a parable of which the subject well might be that unhappy Guy de Maupassant, whose insanity, coupled with an attempt on his own life, sent a thrill through the best society in Europe, not many months ago. He has painted for our instruction, if likewise to the amazement of all serious minds, the France and the Paris of to-day. And he has fallen a victim to the passions and follies which he so vividly described. During twelve or fourteen years, he poured out upon an audience never weary of listening, as many as one hundred and fifty stories, long and short, grave and gay, to suit all tempers save the modest and the philosophic. He had proved himself the most admirable storyteller of our generation, provided we look only to the workmanship, and disregard the moral. Thus, to pursue our comparison, we may liken him to the explorer of some quaint museum in which things old and new lie side by side, fantastically shapen yet true to life, and giving back the world in miniature. Nay more, Maupassant was the painter of a gallery of pictures, to which many eyes were drawn. But he was also, unluckily for himself, a pilgrim in search of the miraculous, the talismanic, desperately seeking after new pleasures, though to purchase them implied, as with Raphaël de Valentin, the very shrinking of the warp and woof of life and mental suicide.

Thus, like M. Ernest Renan, Victor Hugo, and George Sand, he continues the story of French literature as it goes down that steep descent, along which it has been hurrying these many years. And if we dwell for a moment on his sudden fame and no less sudden collapse—which we do with a reluctance easily imaginable—the reason is, that not only in distinguished French circles, but even, to some extent, among ourselves, it has been thought a mark of modern culture to be acquainted with the world he sketches. This we look upon as, in every sense, a mistake, which would never be tolerated

\* 1. *Contes et Nouvelles*, and other Novels. Par Guy de Maupassant. Paris, 1891.

2. *Lettres à George Sand*. Par G. Flaubert. Paris, 1884.

3. *Portraits et Souvenirs Littéraires*. Par Th. Gautier. Paris, 1885.

4. *Essais et Psychologie Contemporaine*. Par Paul Bourget. Paris, 1891.

5. *Feuilles Détachées*. Par Ernest Renan. Paris, 1892.

by sound judges of literature. There can be no charm where manliness and human feeling are so conspicuously absent. Yet neither the critic nor the historian can afford to neglect the signs which are every day multiplying of the French decadence. They prophesy of a moral catastrophe, while they hasten it on, according to the Virgilian lines :—

Sin maculæ incipient rutilo immiscerier igni,  
Omnia tum pariter vento nimisque videbis  
Fervere: non illa quisquam me nocte per  
altum

Ire, neque a terra moneat convellere funem.

None, indeed, of the lugubrious tales Maupassant invented can exceed his own in melancholy. Once more we are reminded of the diseased men of letters who before him have been the world's wonder, — Gérard de Nerval, Murger, Baudelaire, Edgar Poe, Heine, Lenau. These belong to our own time; and in the background mightier figures are huddled together, whimpering, or laughing, or fixed in deadly silence, — Swift, and Pascal, and Tasso, and ought we not to include Rabelais, the shameless jester whose finest wit sinks down and expires in foulest fancies?

Well has Théophile Gautier observed, in speaking of his enigmatic friend Baudelaire (whose sense of beauty was transformed to a passion for things most horrible), that literature has ever been, for the genuine artist, a *Via Dolorosa*. Especially in modern times is the saying verified that to him "Every sensation is the subject of analysis." He becomes unconsciously a double person, like those hypnotized or insane creatures whose unity of being seems to have melted into groups of lower and conflicting existences, at once the despair and the attraction of medical science. If the artist, says Gautier, cannot find another corpse, he will stretch himself on the marble slab of the dissecting-room, and, by a prodigy frequent in literature, plunge the scalpel into his own heart. Cost what it may, he will seize the Protean idea which is forever escaping him, and put his knee on its breast. But, even then, how long and arduous will the struggle be until he has clothed it in the fitting style, given it the

color which shall display it most becomingly, and draped it in severe or lovely folds! No wonder if, under such continued excitement, the nerves grow irritable and the brain is set on fire. Then comes hysteria, *la névrose*, with its strange quietude, its sleeplessness and hallucinations, its indefinable anguish, morbid caprice, and fantastic depravity; with its motiveless likes and dislikes, its energy and prostration, its longing after excitants, and its disgust for wholesome food.

Shall we call the picture of literary decadence over-charged? By no means. The proof is that, although sketched more than twenty years ago, it corresponds with fatal precision to the case we have before us. Guy de Maupassant might have sat for this portrait in Gautier's studio. At the comparatively early age of two-and-forty, his inexhaustible genius has been suddenly shattered to pieces. It was his own doing, says the world; let him blame none but himself. His own doing, certainly; yet not altogether. The vivid temperament which betrayed Maupassant to his ruin might, in a happier state of society, have kept its tone, instead of being infected with leprosy, and deprived, by the atheism all round it, of a refuge in its utmost need. Victor Hugo wrote "*Les Misérables*" to show that it is civilization which creates its own thieves and scoundrels. Be that as it may, we shall not be stating a paradox, when we affirm that the sensual unbelief of the Parisian world must answer for the mental disease to which so many others like Maupassant have succumbed. The philosopher in his diamond panoply of pure reason may laugh its arrows to scorn. Not so the artist, who is, like a child, impressionable and even fantastic. As Maupassant himself has remarked, the sense which is strongest in the story-teller is that of sight; that is to say, a heightened power of vision, fixing itself on the shows of things, and discerning the truth by means of subtle changes in eye, and lip, and feature. It is, in short, a kind of feminine intuition, in which the French have ever excelled, but which brings with it the dangers of all excited feeling, as experience sorrowfully proves.



We take Guy de Maupassant, then, as summing up in his life no less than in the twenty volumes of his writing, one of the latest chapters in the history of France. His museum is like an old curiosity shop, we have said. But, being French and not English, it has its own peculiar character. Our excellent friend, Mrs. Grundy, for whose strong common sense we profess no sort of disdain, if she could discuss the matter, in French of Stratford-atte-Bowe, with M. Prudhomme, would find in that gentleman a critic of her own way of thinking. M. Prudhomme, to his honor be it spoken, has lately begun to sweep from the shop-windows on the Paris boulevards those shameless photographs and pictures which have too long been suffered in them. He has prevailed on the judges to sentence the actors and managers of the Théâtre Libre to the fine and imprisonment which they richly deserved. And he may one day commit the volumes of Zola and Maupassant to the flames. Mankind will not lose by the holocaust. It was said of George Sand that, although she did not affect the style of Miss Sewell or Miss Charlotte Yonge, she "always wrote like a gentleman." M. Guy de Maupassant is a gentleman by birth and education; but he does not write like one. The epithets by which this trait in his character might be most forcibly described, exist in French as in English; yet, though we agree with Lord Chesterfield that there is some advantage in knowing the language of "Les Halles," we shall not stoop to employ them. A critic need not be exactly a precisian. But if he detests prudery, he does not straightway run to the other extreme. What he finds unworthy in Aristophanes, or Shakespeare, in Chaucer, Swift, or Smollett, he sets down as such; nor will he allow that genius has the privilege of falling, when it pleases, into the mire. Is there no such thing as depravity of taste, because men without inward discernment tell us that realism in art is the only method? Or is vulgarity, henceforth, to be the test and token of sincere aims in literature?

Enough on this point for the present. We must not stand arguing at the door.

Our guide, who, as we say, is the painter himself, is impatient to be describing his sketches. As we enter, it becomes manifest that we are within the walls of no Royal Academy or exhibition of old masters. The vivacity of colors and figures, the skilful grouping, the firm and easy touch, and the recurring choice of gruesome or terrible subjects, assure us that we have crossed the Channel. But the absence of a religious, an ideal tone, and the artist's absorption in the present, declare that neither Raffaele nor Giotto has passed that way. All is unmistakably French, and French of the late nineteenth century. There is the fervid atmosphere of Regnier or Fromentin, combined with that attention to objects of still life which always marks a period of decadence. Amid this profusion of scenes, we are struck with the clearness of the landscape, whether on the Norman coast, and the shores of the Gulf of St. Juan, or under the transparent sky of Algiers. Neither can we mistake the style, so careful in its details, yet aiming at a grandiose effect on the whole. We perceive that it is Flaubert's, who, with his steady and prolonged gaze, noted every shade of color, and was as patient with a brush in his hand as though he were fitting together the stones of a mosaic.

Maupassant, indeed, first saw the light in a château at Miromesnil, in the department of the lower Seine, and was a friend and disciple of the unsociable recluse whose life during long years at Croisset, near Rouen, we know so well. There did Flaubert spend his days alone, looking out on the broad river, with the sails upon it, and torturing himself to death in the composition of "L'Education Sentimentale." In master and pupil the keen yet boisterous Norman temper comes out remarkably. Flaubert himself might have been the author of "Boule de Suif;" nor would the mixture of great qualities therein have done him dishonor. It was Maupassant's first published work. He had written much, but not printed a line, under his fierce old master's criticism, when in the "Soirées de Médan"—a collection of short and scandalous stories by Zola, Jules de Goncourt, and others of the

"physiological school"—appeared this unpleasant, but most powerful and pathetic, sketch of an incident during the war of 1870. It gave the author a name at once; and no marvel! All that is revolting in the new school—its suffocating atmosphere and cold analysis—might be illustrated from "*Boule de Suif*." But there was something more in it than Zolaesque brutality, or the tedious yet impressive collocation of details with which Flaubert's name is inseparably associated. There was humor, pathos, strong character-drawing, and the most deceptive air, not merely of realism but of real life. Cornudet the democrat, Loiseau the humorous wine merchant—"a true Norman full of wiles and joviality"—the weather-beaten religious sister, the Orleanist count and his wife are all as solid and palpable as if flesh and blood had gone to their making. And "*Boule de Suif*," who gives her name, or rather her nickname, to the story—how can we praise her sufficiently? Describe her, indeed, we cannot, except by a circumlocution, yet in her degraded but still womanly nature, the oddest notions lurk of the base and the honorable, making her—poor, bedraggled creature—a sort of heroine, in the "general overturn." It is the absurdest, yet most touching situation.

And it is in the spirit of Flaubert. If there is in it a throbbing vein of compassion, there is also unconquerable cynicism. The author of "*Madame Bovary*" felt all the rage of Timon when he glanced out on the mediocrities and blockheads which to him, as to Carlyle, made up the great majority of mankind. He wrote once to George Sand, with the truculence of Swift, that he would fain smother them in the common sewer. His devoted pupil shared the sentiment. Never, from the day he began to write until the pen dropped from his convulsed fingers, did Maupassant grow weary of enlarging on "the infamy of the human heart." With the insolent gaiety of youth he paints it in the faces, actions, gestures, of this typical set of Frenchmen and Frenchwomen who, in spite of their chivalry, their religion, and their sense of gratitude, compel a miserable woman, just now plucked from the gutter, to sacrifice, not her virtue (she could pretend to none), but the instinct of shame left in her sunken nature, that they may escape from the hands of the Prussians. When the grotesque tragedy is done, they wash themselves in running water, and turn with bourgeois disgust from the hateful and improper thing to

which they owe their deliverance. This we may call satire, if we will, but it has risen to a great height, and is in a key untouched, we are sure, by Juvenal.

But the root of bitterness remains. Our feeling, as we read the last words of "*Boule de Suif*," is not so much pity for the victim, as a loathing like that which overcame Gulliver on returning from his last voyage, and falling in with the Yahoos who were his own kith and kin. It provokes an indictment of human nature. That anarchic moral returns in Maupassant's stories like a refrain. The disgust of his own species never quits him. For dogs and horses he can feel; nor is he without a thrill of compassion when he comes across suffering or tormented children. He pities the miserable, too; outcasts, vagabonds, cripples, of whom he knows many sad and melting stories, appeal, not, he would say, to his humanity (for the human is vile and selfish), but to that quality of tenderness in the modern, highly civilized man, which is artificial, and not in any sense due to nature. He is eloquent on the struggle maintained by choice spirits against the something that made the world, and made it so brutal and ugly. That Promethean strain, so marked in a stage of Goethe's life and poetry, which Shelley also has harped upon in exquisite golden verse, inflicts on us a sense of surprise, when we hear it in Maupassant. But the antique symbol of a rebellious, suffering spirit which defies the god of nature, whether he is to be styled Zeus or Satan, has never perhaps died out of men's minds; and in "*L'Inutile Beauté*" it finds vehement expression, though in language too gross and violent to be quoted.

Maupassant, we have said, is a true Norman, with the sanguine temper of his race, and their broad humor, which can be sly when it chooses, almost like the Lowland Scotch. He indulged the country squire's enthusiasm for hunting and every kind of field sport. Nor has any English writer given more faithfully the impression of wintry scenes, with their cold, clinging mists, grey skies, and ghostly moon, such as we may look at, for instance, in "*Amour*" an admirable sketch of wild duck shooting. He felt also, in his own language, "a violent passion" for the sea and the river. In all his books the clear and astonishingly precise description of the quick changing forms, and dancing or slumbering beauty of the waters, would satisfy at once a scientific observer like Mr. Tyndall, and a dreamy artist like

Turner in his best period. The resources of French prose since Victor Hugo have been strikingly enlarged; and a new and refined color-sense betokens its presence by the added suppleness, the continual gleaming of words which fill the eye with a vision as distinct as a photograph, while adding to it the tints of the landscape. With Maupassant there is no affectation of artistic phrase. He writes a limpid French, bright and unembarrassed wherever it has no reminiscence of Flaubert, as in most of his later stories. In the conversations which he so admirably fits to the personages brought on his mimic stage, there is no sign of mannerism. They are quite unaffected and true to nature. He has expressed a hearty contempt for the decadent style, "*ce vocabulaire bizarre, compliqué, nombreux, et chinois,*" which aims at representing "in euphonious verse" — or prose — "the manifold sensibilities," and the "confused, nervous vibrations," that, to a Helmholtz, would furnish the stuff out of which our dreams of reality are woven, and determine the pattern wherewith they are stamped. By and by, Maupassant, when his mental tone was enfeebled, did lapse occasionally into the morbid style of the symbolists. At no time, however, was it truly his own. The rude Norman vigor, the good sense, not quite unnumbered with a certain — shall we say stupidity? — which he inherited from his forefathers, and which ought to have kept him sound and healthy, would have sent him away laughing from lackadaisical poetasters, in whom there is no genius, but only a serious cultivation of æsthetic follies. He had no wish to be a prose Verlaine.

From nature he had received the endowment, somewhat rare among Parisian novelists, of hearty laughter. As a born Frenchman we might expect him to be witty and amusing; but humor we should not have looked for. There is not much of that free and joyous turbulence in the French literature of the day. Was it by descent Gaulish rather than Germanic or Provençal? But the Gaulish elements seem to be yielding, on the one hand, to a peasant dulness, which has no more sparkle in it than a millstone; and, on the other, to a finical euphuism, full of lust and languor, in comparison with which mere coarseness would seem to be on the side of the angels. Maupassant, however, was not a scented popinjay, like those to whom Paris means all the world they have travelled in, or those others who have come up from the provinces young, and are glad to

forget the miseries of their peasant childhood. In his acquaintance with fields and hedgerows, with the life of the farm, with its sounds at morning and eventide, with wild birds and wild flowers, he resembles George Sand, though he lacks her untiring good-nature, and is not in the least a Utopian or a Socialist.

Suggestive, indeed, as well as saddening, is the descent from lightsome and touching romance, in "*La Petite Fadette*" and "*Les Maîtres Sonneurs*," to the naked reality, though we grant its flashes of the ludicrous, which fills Maupassant's country scenes. They leave a feeling on the mind not unlike a mediæval dance of death, painted among cornfields and vineyards. Everywhere we are sensible of a fixed and ingrained hardness which strikes home like a breeze from an iceberg, deadly cold and pitiless. The rustic workman or farmer is a being with one serious passion, money; and his amusements are as ignoble as his ambition is mean. Among the women, roughened by labor in the fields, there is not much antique virtue, but they rule their households with a rod of iron. Keeping these sights before us, we may compare "*L'Histoire d'une Fille de Ferme*" with "*Adam Bede*," or "*Le Père Amable*" with "*Silas Marner*." Upon the English stories, for all their tragic burden, a mild radiance seems to be shed; the great sky, with its stars and sunsets, hangs above us while we move among these men and women, whose thoughts are not invariably bent earthwards, nor their spirit become a tired and fretful beast, dragging the plough with unwilling muscles. There is sunshine on the land, which yet we know is not simply a painted operatic scene, but, in some measure, at all events, taken from life. And from life, too, Maupassant draws, but in what ashen colors! Rose, the farm-servant, is quite another than Hettie Sorrel; she is devoid of her charms and her infantine coquettishness, and as dull-minded as the kine she milks, or the fowls to which she scatters grain. The farmer who forces her to marry him is a mere savage, brutal and strong, with passions into which not one single ray of fancy or affection has passed. So is it with "*Père Amable*" also, who makes a village tragedy, with senile avarice for its dominant motive; and who ends by a miser's suicide, where all alike, young and old, are miserly. The painting is always — we fear, because the facts warrant it — a depressing "grey in grey;" true doubtless, but spectral as the mists in Ossian, with ghosts murmuring

hollow on the wind, and unspeakably desolate.

And still, bursts of laughter are not wanting; genuine, unforced hilarity, to which the dialect adds a keen flavor, as in "Une Vente," and "Tribunaux Rustiques." There is even at times (would it came oftener!) a vivid touch of the old world, something quaint, and lovable, or perhaps affecting; witness "La Ficelle," with its Teniers-like drawing of market-day in Goderville; or the exceedingly piteous tale of "Le Gueux," the starved cripple, in whose hunger none will believe until he dies of it. We are reminded by more than one stroke of "Esmond" and Thackeray, in the pretty, passionate story called "Une Veuve," and in "Mlle. Perle." Touching, also, is "La Rempailleuse," the romance of the gipsy chair-maker in love with the village apothecary; a few pages, but worthy of Dickens, though more subtle than he would have imagined them. Even Chaucer might not have scorned the life-like comedy and grave tenderness of "Hantot Père et Fils;" while he would have depicted in his most festive coloring "La Confession de Théodule Sabot," the unbelieving village carpenter on his knees before M. l'Abbé, and his naïve breakages of the Ten Commandments. Like these are the most taking of the country stories, which almost persuade us to unsay the charge we have brought against their author, of hatred of the human race. That he loves a joke is much in his favor; and we allow that his laugh has an infectious ring about it which ought to scatter some of our dislike for the self-conscious misanthrope. Moments there are when we acknowledge that Maupassant, like all who have mixed with high and low sympathetically, can be genial and even kind-hearted. When he talks his native patois, with its delightful yet unconscious touches of the comic, its rude repartee, quaint farce, and explosive jollity, one cannot help laughing all down the page, and the air clears in a surprising manner. It is worth noting that the extremely gross stories are by no means the most amusing; while those to which there are absolutely no parallels, except in the least readable pages of Lucian or Aretino — though they strike one dumb with horror and amazement — have nothing humorous in them at all. Human laughter, as distinguished from the bestial or idiotic grimacing of creatures low in the scale, which mop and mow at things unspeakable, has its peculiar and exhilarating essence, not to be heightened, though it

may be hideously counterfeited, by the introduction of these base elements. Even Voltaire might have taught his countrymen the lesson which Thackeray and Carlyle (men of such opposed tempers that their agreement is a strong warrant of the truth) have exemplified in some of the most brilliant, and most mirth-provoking creations of the comic muse. Very deep, or very noble laughter is always impersonal, and implies a deliverance from overwhelming passion, not surrender to it. When Maupassant's peasantry laugh their best, they seem to stand back from their grim and sordid existence, like men looking at a picture; and the strings of their heart, nay, of their purse, are loosened. The fine Celtic gaiety, of which traces yet live in these stories, though less frequent as we move on with them, may love pleasure and excitement; but it is too eager, too delicate, to dwell, in the icy mood of the Epicurean, upon its own sensations. It is warm and tender, somewhat given to change perhaps, but as unlike as possible to the nature of the voluptuary, whose fancy swings to and fro between Tiberius and the neo-pagans, and whose weary dreams Maupassant chose to delineate with ever-growing earnestness during his brief career.

In these reflections, we are already leaving the country roads and silent, desolate villages, where the sun shines most days of the week on empty streets, and on Sunday beholds the peasant measuring his rood of ground with heavy paces that reach its boundary all too soon. Passing by the well-drawn but unsavory "Maison Tellier," which reminds us by sundry details and its half sentimental manner, of Dickens — but Dickens grown French and immoral — we follow, perhaps in the doleful steps of "L'Odyssée d'une Fille," until we find ourselves in the midst of bourgeois of all descriptions, in small country towns, at seaside watering-places, and finally, in Paris. The change of scene, though it brings some movement along with it, and a quicker beating of the pulse, does not vary the characters in a drama which never ceases to be sordid and brutal. In the peasant story well named "Le Diable," the farmer strikes a bargain across his mother's dying-bed with the old witch who is to lay her out; and La Rapet, the witch, gains a couple of francs by deliberately frightening the invalid into her last agony. What then? M. Caravan, the functionary who is the hero of "En Famille," will endure a comparison with the guileful peasant Honoré, as



his wife, though well-dressed and fond of reading the *feuilleton* in her husband's journal, is no whit behind the village Hecate in boldness and brutality. Maupassant does not stupefy his reader at every turn, as did the honest Balzac, with calculations of francs, écus, and louis-d'ors. Yet he contrives to give as forcible an impression that the most avaricious people under heaven are the French; and that every class, from the shoeblack to the Legitimist noble, is infected with the same desire, to make money and invest it in good securities. We might have supposed that he would have blushed for his countrymen while he depicted their weakness. But no; French nature is so made; and granting that pleasure is pleasant, it would appear that the means of procuring pleasure which (so low has an atheist world fallen) is obviously money in gold or in paper, has drawn to itself the infinite charms of the end it was invented to subserve. Mammon has vanquished Belial, and leads him triumphantly captive.

Yet, of course, Belial reigns; and the gallery painted over with his diversions, his frolics, and his deceptions—for he is a liar from the beginning—now meets our gaze; while the artist, changing his tone with admirable quickness, rehearses adventures on the boulevards by day and by night, throws in a dozen river scenes with their picturesque animation and unquotable incidents, displays the electric-lighted masquerade of Paris, circling round about from the opera to the Folies Bergères, and in a word, offers to make us acquainted with *la canaille* in all its variety of costume—in velvet and diamonds, black dress-coat, and second-hand finery; or out at elbows, ragged, foul, and famine-stricken. If the modern Hogarth desires (it is not expedient indeed) to see what Vanity Fair has become on Sunday afternoon in the neighborhood of the great city—"coronatum petulans madidumque Tarentum"—he may read Maupassant's description of the things he has seen there. All is vulgar and atrocious; a gathering on the riverside, amid artificial gardens, of such a company as only the last days of civilization could collect under the open sky. The "infamy of the human heart" has created many an Inferno, but we question if any more monstrous has ever crossed the fancy of poet or seer. And this, be it remembered, is no invention; it is simply a colored photograph. There, says the artist, proud of his work, may be seen all the world's refuse, the debauchery that still has distinction, and

the fungus-growths of Parisian society—journalists, gentlemen, thieves, knights of industry with a vanished front, men and women well known to the police, whose *dossiers* would furnish very instructive reading; a crowd as dull of brain as it is disreputable, but furious and quarrelsome, intoxicated with brutal excitement. It is a section of the modern chaos which men still persist in calling civilization, exposed to the sunlight, and so much the more revolting that those who inhabit there have never guessed that they are the damned. Of none among them can it be said, *Quæsit lucem, ingemuitque reperta*. Did the light make them ashamed, we might hope that sooner or later they would strive to ascend out of the pit. It is quite otherwise with them; and these "politer pleasures," which Swift in his terrible irony calls "the productions of art and reason on our side of the globe," appear, even to the light-hearted Guy de Maupassant, a subject rather for gaiety than for reprobation. In crude, but quite unimpassioned language, and sometimes with amusement, he throws down his lively sketches of a depravity which has long passed the bounds of permissible human speech. Be it never forgotten that the canvas on which these horrors find a place is no Eastern city given over to idols, but Paris, the head and front of European culture. And the pencil which does not refuse to trace them, the mind which dwells upon them without abhorrence, are those of a man of genius, himself a part of the society whose portrait he has drawn to the satisfaction of the tens of thousands who read him.

We cannot pause over the crowd of miniatures and pastels, vivid as the one, or firm and clear as the other, in which Maupassant has related the every-day life of modern France. It is a bird's-eye view from the Eiffel Tower, but extending north and south, to Etretat and Trouville on one side, and to Hyères and Monte Carlo, with Corsica rising up like a ghost out of the Mediterranean, on the other. Many of the situations are gay and bright, like the battle of flowers on the Boulevard de Foncière, down at Cannes. The landscape is always a marvel, whether it be Mont St. Michel with its wide sands, dizzy, circling heights, and blue sky shedding floods of light, or Antibes in a glow of sunshine by the sea. But, if nature, in spite of the cynical eye, can never lose its enchantment, and the Divine presence still haunts the garden planted eastward of Eden, it is not so with man. Formida-

ble symptoms of an apish or even tigerish descent betray themselves, even where the combatants are pelting each other with roses. Begin how the story may, in lovely sunshine, under the bowers of trellised vines, or in the drawing-room decked with exquisite statuary and masterpieces of the latest art, we can never doubt where it will end. For Maupassant belongs to a tribe which should be known as the "vulture artists," who are enamored of decay. It is a wonder to see this fresh-colored, athletic man, whose bull neck and rather sullen expression offer a strange contrast to his dreamy eyes, taking his pleasure in the depths of rascaldom and crime, not as a physician who is compelled to go down thither, and still less as a saviour of men from the powers of darkness, but as a strolling player, an idle gentleman, a *flâneur*, in short, who does not know what to do with himself, and who has discovered that merely to write his experience will bring him in money. For he, too, worships the golden calf, and has long since exchanged the dreams of his youth for what they would fetch in the market. And so he produces at length "*Bel-Ami*," to serve as the newest edition in one volume of the "*Comédie Humaine*."

*Bel-Ami*, otherwise Georges Duroy, is not altogether unlike Philippe Brideau, the truculent adventurer who succeeds where Lucien de Rubempré, a delicate but vain and volatile genius, could not, despite his fine gifts, help failing, that is to say, in journalism. Duroy, who is a peasant born, and has served in Algeria, possesses no capital when the scene opens, but audacity and good looks. He is educated, of course; in other words, he has failed to take his degree at the university, and can read the newspapers. "Himself," as Bentham would say, "is his great concern." Not one single generous sentiment does he own; while, being an enlightened Frenchman, he has no religion. He belongs, in the strict sense of the term, to the dangerous classes. His ambition is to "arrive;" by what means, provided they do not bring him into contact with the police, he thinks perfectly indifferent. And "arrive" he does. Not, however, by talent, — although he discovers in himself the journalist's happy knack of taking another man's ideas without paying for them, and setting them out to his own advantage. No, in the latitude of modern Paris, fortune goes by favor; talent has little to do with it; and M. Georges Duroy is indebted for success to three women, two of whom he marries (one at

the Mairie, and the other at the Madeleine); while the third, who becomes in course of time his mother-in-law, has sacrificed to him not only her virtue, but, as the author is delighted to point out, her religion.

It is an edifying romance, not marred, be sure of it, in the telling. The style is crisp, high-strung, and exceedingly photographic, — the perfection of that which impressionists aim at but seldom achieve. From its descriptions, an archæologist of the twenty-first century might reproduce, with most admired exactness, the form and habit of Parisian life as it goes on in the many-storied houses and outside them. We are here shown, with singular clearness, the Paris of "*Les Rois en Exil*." The Prince of Orange has hardly ceased to tread its asphalt, and ex-king Milan offers himself to view as he rides in the Bois de Boulogne. From entresol to garret we pass to and fro. Yet in the multitude of human beings we distinguish an amazingly small variety of types. Huge Paris, with its two million mortals living inside the barriers, seems no larger, no more opulent in character and circumstance, than one of Terence's comedies. The scene has grown to vast proportions; it is an immense spectacle; but the players, and even the masks they wear, disappoint us with their eternal monotony. Adventurers like Duroy and Forestier, Jew money-changers, proprietors of journals, and members of the High Finance like M. Walter, dissolute and rapacious ministers like M. Laroche Mathieu, who under the Third Republic are seated in the palaces of kings, and, if they had their due, would be standing in the pillory; courtesans of the drawing-room type like Madeleine, and of the *gamine* type like Madame de Marelle; such are the puppets that fret and strut their hour upon the stage; and while we acknowledge their resemblance to well-known personages, we feel but a slight interest in the story they are acting. For is it not written, over and over again, in the books of the chronicles of modern Lutetia? One is tempted to cry out in the immortal words of the French rustic: "*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*" Who that has read the fiction of the last twenty years, but could guess these situations and their *dénoûment* blindfold? In that sordid struggle for existence, the men trust to their cunning and their impudence, the women to their beauty and their quickness in what may be called scene-shifting and by-play. Georges Duroy, passing



them in review as they ride or drive by him in the Bois, mutters to himself their astonishing history, in which no degradation, no treachery or base deceit, is wanting. He finds much amusement in the thought. It is, again says Maupassant, "The profound, the everlasting infamy of man beneath a grave exterior." For these card-sharps, directors of bubble companies, eaters of their wives' wages of sin, are citizens of renown, honorable men, holding their heads high and looking the world in the face. And these women, who have come hither in such superb toilets, but too many of whom are well known to the police, put on airs of conscious distinction, as though the falling snow would stain their whiteness.

Such, according to Maupassant, is the great world of fashion and finance, *où l'on s'amuse*. To these have fallen the riches of civilization; and for their secure estate in luxury the millions toil and eat black bread, tasting neither joy nor hope. The great scoundrel greatly succeeds; he is called a strong character, and men give way before him. Duroy, with the nerves of a Chasseur d'Afrique and no soul but a stomach, finds that cunning, faced with brutality, will carry him far. While his friend and patron, Forestier, is lying dead in the room, he makes a proposal of marriage to Forestier's widow; and, next day or so, the lady accepts. But he forgets to be married in church; so that when his "civil" wife is to be cast off for the young Jewess with a portion whom he has abducted, he can get his divorce in proper form. Religion, edified by his reprobation of a mere contract at the registrar's, bestows on him all her pomp and ceremony beneath the classic roof of the Madeleine — doubtless for a consideration. In terms of fervid eloquence, a high ecclesiastic blesses the union and expatiates on the noble mission of the journalist. And Georges Duroy "thanks with brief thanksgiving whatever gods there be." This world and the next are at his feet. The crowd, gathered on the steps of the temple, represent Paris subdued by those notable qualities which have thus proved themselves the fittest to survive. Thanks to his audacity and his predacity, his lying and his good looks, the peasant's son, who now signs with the *particule* and is sure to be a deputy, has "arrived." It is the triumph of cynicism and of selfishness. But all is in the grand style, though soiled by the hands which turn it to such good account. Veneering without, corruption within!

Such is "Bel-Ami," — wicked Paris grown fifty years older since Balzac, and infinitely less picturesque, with the electric light instead of flickering oil-lamps, and the little tables outside the cafés holding not only their tiny glasses of *fine de champagne*, but "bocks" of frothing Bavarian. There is, however, a more subtle style of painting these scenes, in which art and sentiment shall be allowed their due influence. We are told how delighted was Georges Duroy when he discovered the pregnant word "anemic." But being neither artist nor city-bred, he shows in his own career the stubborn and, so to speak, the muscular obstinacy of the peasant, who, when his teeth are fixed in a bone, will not let it go, even if he is whipped to bleeding. For "anemic" elegance and the "male hysteria," which it implies, we must turn to "Notre Cœur," described by a feminine reader as "exquisite." Yes, it is exquisite enough, like the flush of consumption, or the colors of the dying mullet, in which Roman epicures found so much to admire. The combination of high art with intense depravity has always been reckoned exquisite, from the days of Lesbos and Sardis, to the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Louis the Great, and the present French decadence. Its most effective historians, nevertheless, are men like Alphonse Daudet and Paul Bourget; not men like Maupassant, keen and subtle observer though he be. "Notre Cœur" has, of course, its brilliant pages; but in subtlety of color and high-wrought passion it will not compare for an instant with George Sand's "Elle et Lui," to say nothing of "Lélia" or "Indiana." Neither is the self-conscious, half-poetic mood which Bourget is fond of dissecting and of adorning with his passionate melancholy, quite in the vein of our sturdy Norman. Where sentiment is concerned, Maupassant does little more than make believe. He prefers a drinking-scene, in which his comrades laugh over barrack-room stories, and make the glasses on the table ring again.

Still, he would not be the accomplished French genius that he is — or must we say, was? — had he not learnt to pursue his trains of idle reverie, tricking out decadence with artificial prettiness, and sweetening it with sentiment. In "Notre Cœur" there is a sort of murderous enchantment, which takes prisoner soul and sense, though certainly not those of an Englishman, who despises what to his Gallic neighbor might seem to be luxuries of feeling. It is a dream, hanging clear

above our heads — detached from duties and moralities — where instinct may do as it will and no fault found. You do not like Michèle de Burne, or André Mariolle, or Massival, or Lamarthe. Still less do you admire them. But it is impossible to question whether they are alive. Under the spell of so vivid a presentment, you forget almost that there is another view of existence than that in which the senses, refined or merely animal, feed and have their fill. Perhaps, while you stand looking into Madame de Burne's salon, some words from an ancient book cross your memory, concerning "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." You may even be tempted to quote them in Maupassant's hearing. Do so, and he will turn fiercely on you; but in a moment, he will give, as it were, a furtive smile, betokening that he has some surprise in store. We have not seen half his collection yet. And Norbert de Varenne, the poet of "Bel-Ami," has uttered in his morose fashion certain thoughts which, as Pascal would say, lie at the back of the head. We shall hear more of them presently.

But Michèle de Burne, the lady of "Notre Cœur," is "one of those creations that distinguish a new generation," and how does Maupassant imagine her? Mark it well. She is not romantic and passion-struck, as in the long past era of Chateaubriand and George Sand; neither does she count among *les joyeuses* of the Second Empire, who longed for nothing but pleasure. No, Michèle, the widow of a man to whom she was forcibly wedded, is "a being of undecided sensibilities," and a restless spirit, easily shaken. She seems to have made acquaintance with all the narcotics that appease or irritate the nerves — with chloroform that stupefies, as with ether and morphia that explore the world of dreams, quench the senses, and put the feelings to sleep. She is singularly artificial — factitious, we might almost say. Lamarthe, who knew the kind, has judged these creatures with philosophic severity. Marolle, however, replies that it is the fault of the poets in prose and verse, who once gave women an ideal to dream about, and now preach the vulgarity of all things. Love, he says, is no more to be found in books; therefore it has vanished from life. In the sequel he discovers that not even the passion which has taken hold of him will awaken a sense of enchantment in the lady; for the old story of the Sleeping Beauty has reversed its meaning in our time, and it is base

realism that calls upon the hero to put it to flight. Michèle has no heart; she never had one. "How futile and personal a thing is woman!" cries Lamarthe. In "Notre Cœur" the tragedy is a kind of stale-mate, where the lady and the lover stand perplexed, and no god comes to their deliverance. It is sentiment reduced to dry-rot and evil-smelling dust, some breath of which given from time to time leads us to scent a moral pestilence, or black death, in the air of France.

To this view Maupassant would have laughingly assented. For he has been leading us all along to his pathological department. The world of fashion is only not insane because it is frivolous. Pierce through the thin rind and you plunge into an abyss. Or, to keep to our illustration, when we have seen the painted outside of things, their glitter and gay decoration, our guide, drawing aside a curtain, will invite us into his next hall of imagery.

It is sombre enough at first glance. We perceive many of the old figures with which we have made acquaintance in the joyous stories. But they are changed in one most significant particular, — their hearts are laid bare for our inspection to the core. "Think you," enquires Novalis, or some other musing sage, "that there is anything so dreadful in its nakedness as the heart of man?" We can study it here, in the spectral kingdoms of vice and misery unadorned, upon which that high beautiful world of Paris and the golden life reposes. Stars and ribands are torn off; the decorous evening dress is rent from most respectable shoulders; Justice itself flings away its robes. There is no varnish now, to film over with deceptive gloss that immense illusion before which we bow the knee and call it "Society," as though to be put out of its pale were as bad as solitary imprisonment. The raging moral chaos, wherein no law and no light are discoverable, is pictured by this violent artist, himself floating on its foam and filth, as a sea which beats incessantly upon rock-bound shores, leaping ever and anon above the loftiest crags, and sending inland long splashes of brine and sand mingled. As we read in the painfully vivid sketch called "Un Fils," the fathers of all the criminal vagrants, of the diseased, forsaken, and dangerous members of society, are neither the poor nor the hard-working, but the bourgeois intent on enjoyment, the Academician, the artist, the deputy, the senator. Note, of course, the exaggeration; but mark also how much truth lurks in the gibe. Behind or below

fashion, culture, and opulence, there is the fallen world, tenanted by thieves, forgers murderers *in esse* or *in posse*; by abandoned women whose misery is greater than their sin; and, alas, by little children doomed never so much as to understand what innocence means. Our guide to these heartrending sights is only too competent. He paints and he speaks, not as a religious man—he is no Frà Angelico—but calmly, like a citizen of the world. Yet his voice trembles a little; and, in the midst of his shameful narrative there will break out, as it were, a sob from the depths of his heart,—as in the piteous story of “L’Armoire.” The tale itself is slight, is nothing. But the picture of the child, turned out of its poor little bed and sent to sleep all night as well as it can, on a chair in the cupboard—and the child of such a mother, engaged in such a trade—who can express the things of which it is an evidence? They are as touching as they are horrible. And in one sense or another they are most true—not in Paris alone, or Vienna, or Berlin, but, as our police reports tell us, in London, Liverpool—where not in our huge cities? No, we cannot handle the theme; it is pitch and we may not be defiled. But many are the “children of the desolate;” and to them defilement clings from the day they were born.

When Maupassant tells a story like this, which goes to the heart, we bear with his coarseness, much as it offends a healthy nostril; we are almost willing to forgive and to like the man. But he is a creature of instinct; the pity which fills his eyes one moment is forgotten the next. He cares only for excitement, nor does he reckon of what species, tender, morose, or even cruel. Not that he gloats over cruelty as done by himself; but he has a mania for studying its phrases. The world of detestable, though still human vice, seems to undergo a transformation as we pass with him along his dark galleries. Our step falters where he gains assurance. Why explore these Bedlams, whether of life or literature? “Why?” he replies, “because they are the truth, the only solid ground beneath the world’s illusion.” Thus he indulges, in a mood of mocking complicity, all the bizarre fancies which haunt the last agonies of reason. Upon the inner wall of the vast room we are entering, might be written the author’s own words, in which, if our judgment is not wholly false, an extraordinary and prophetic depth of insight is shown,—“These men,” he writes in “Le Horla,”

“spoke of all things with lucidity, with ease, with intelligence, until their thought, all in a moment, touching on the reef of madness, was shattered to pieces, foundering in that fierce and dreadful ocean, full of raging waves, of mists and hurricanes, which is called insanity.” Maupassant knew these things too well.

Out of the Parisian salon, with its delicate eccentricities of color and adornment, where life is passed in making forbidden love, we pass, then, to the Court of Sessions, the police cell, the asylum. We study the records found in sealed envelopes and secret drawers, the diaries kept hidden for years, the confessions made on deathbeds, which at last proclaim the horrid mystery that has been tearing the heart. In the beautiful language of our prose-poet, De Quincey, we behold “the hidden or averted side of the golden arras, known but not felt, or seen but dimly in the rear, crowding into indistinct proportions.” The epidemic nature of crime has been often remarked upon by moralists and magistrates. Weak imaginations reel under the stroke of horrors vividly presented; and mimicry being among the deepest instincts of mankind, there is always danger that one outrageous incident will make many. Some writers, of whom Hawthorne is perhaps the most daring and subtle, have spent much time and thought in considering the “averted side” of existence. They are fascinated by its irony which evokes unhallowed desires in the austere bosoms, and seems wickedly to sport with dignities, and the virtues that should accompany them. We by no means say that the compelled hypocrisy consequent on some great crime, into which a man, hitherto blameless, has been hurried, may not furnish a subject as lawful as it is tragic on the stage or in romance. But it calls for skilful and even humane handling, lest our self-reverence, and with it our self-control, should be irreparably injured. The cynicism of a Rabelais carries not with it more peril. For we have this treasure of personality in earthen vessels. How tender should we not show ourselves, likewise, of the gift of reason, so hardly conquered from ages of bestial struggling, so beset in our own day with dangers on every hand! For none, who will look into the matter, can question that, as civilization advances, the pressure which its complex activities cannot but exert, is telling on weak and fevered brains. The azote or nitrogen which tempers, while it dulls, uncivilized natures, is being rapidly withdrawn from

our modern air; and we see as in a flaming sky the oxygen kindle, burning up the life it should nourish. While the objects of dread and of desire have multiplied a thousandfold, the brain lags behind; it is more slowly developed, though solicited more than ever; and seems incapable only of acting along the lines which experience has furrowed in it. The pulse of humanity beats dangerously quick in our day. Compared with our ancestors, we seem, in the words of the poet, to be "tremblingly awake." Or, as Maupassant remarks, we find our very senses inadequate, and sigh for new powers which may open to us undreamt-of worlds,—"an enlargement of the soul and of sensation." For, he says, "the mind has but five half-open doors—and these are chained—which we call the five senses. They are five barriers that men enamored of a new art have begun in these days to shake with all their might." Yes, artists "have come to the end of their resources; they are running short of the inedited, of the unknown, of emotions, of images, of all things." Hence they feel tempted to cultivate a "rare and redoubtable faculty," which arises from the diseased sensitiveness of the skin and the whole organism, prompting it to feel every slight emotion with keen energy, and inflicting upon the mind, in accordance with changes of temperature, with savors and scents, or with the varying tones of daylight, sufferings, sadness, and enjoyments unknown to spirits less finely touched. They dabble in narcotics, and add to the number of the *détraqués*, whose existence is a consuming fever, and nothing less than a peril to civilization.

Morphine, it would appear, tends, when taken in large doses, to reverie, the symptoms of which are everywhere visible in modern French literature. But hemp is violent and heady. These sketches of Maupassant, which have already cost us so many words, betray the influence of both. We mean that side by side with an anxious peering into all manner of curious possibilities (where the ordinary five senses are unloosed or terribly intensified) there comes the delineation of maniacal fury, bent on gratifying its cravings in a series of heightened atrocities. The coarse and ill-bred humor which disfigured Maupassant's Norman tales was harmless in comparison. It could only disgust. But the miasma of insanity exhaled from narratives such as "Un Fou," "Moiron," "Chevelure," and "Le Horla" betokens, if we may venture on the expression, a decaying brain. We turn with

unconquerable dread from the like phenomena in those high-colored and plague-stricken artists, Edgar Poe, Baudelaire, and William Blake. In this weird region of nightmare and hallucination nature seems dead. "Wicked dreams," indeed, "abuse the curtained sleep." And, remark, the passion in which all others are taken up and expire, is not, as we might have anticipated, animal gratification, but a longing after blood.

French romance, following in the wake of much modern journalism, shows a decided taste for cruel, no less than obscene horrors. As in the imperial Roman days, so is it now. Thirty years ago and more, Baudelaire, in his strange and bitter "Fleurs du Mal," depicted "the modern monster *ennui*," as "a cowardly bourgeois, dreaming his dream of classic ferocity and debauchery," as "Nero at the desk and Elagabalus behind the counter." For such an audience, intoxicated, as M. Bourget has said, with "analytic libertinism," worn out by its excesses, yet desiring ever more to add fresh stimulants where the old have lost their power, did Maupassant trace, in burning colors, the scenes of his mad gallery. Yet none affected a loftier contempt for the *régime* which is typified in the *bureaucrat* and the *épicier*. "The age of art is gone," he exclaims; "there is no longer even an aristocratic skin. Science has become a convenience, and industry looks only to the market." These be the gods that have triumphed over the worship of beauty, and the passion for knowledge that once was far above rubies. "Think of the ideal no more," cries some jealous divinity to fallen man, "but meditate upon the things of a brute which concern thee, and thou shalt make large discoveries." "Alas," replies Maupassant, "your electric bells and telephones may arouse our interest; but they never can fire our enthusiasm like the ancient forms of thought—not ours, I say, who are the uneasy thralls of a dream of delicate beauty, that haunts our pillow and ruins our existence!"

It is a noble and a just lament. But how discordantly it sounds in these pages adapted to the taste, though beyond the capacity, of the degraded French peasant, or of the woman of fashion, who thinks herself cultivated because she reads what she chooses! Can it be this servant of delicate visions who has put together, with the patience of Flaubert, the dreary record, which, under the title of "Une Vie," has reached a thirty-sixth edition? Was it a thirst after "ancient forms of thought"

which led to the publication of "Fort comme la Mort"? Are the other volumes, which we pass by in disdain, likely to kindle a sacred fire in the youthful imagination which has access to them? Or may we suppose that the career to which, being wealthy, artistic, and her own mistress, the heroine of "Notre Cœur" devoted her leisure, was the fruit of a "haunting ideal?"

No. When Raphaël de Valentin set out on the journey of despair which led him through a world of curiosities to the deadly talisman, he was haunted by no ideal. And it was an ambition not much nobler than George Duroy's, to which Maupassant yielded, when he exchanged the clerk's quill for the novelist's. He found, to use his own expression, that with the same quantity of writing he could make thousands where he had made hundreds—that was all. To amuse a reading public, which gives its hours of idleness to Dumas, Eugène Sue, Zola, and Jules Verne (who appear from statistics to be the favorite authors at Parisian libraries), cannot be deemed a lofty task. But it rewarded this gentleman's facile pen, and gave him wealth and a name in cosmopolitan society. He became a French falconer, that flies at all he sees. Still, these things did not suffice him. Like other modern artists, he would "shake mightily the barriers of the senses," and purchase experience with drugs. The true "Peau de Chagrin," which promises infinite satisfaction and wounds with every draught, is hashish or morphia. How they fulfil the celebrated aspiration in "Les Fleurs du Mal"!

Que tu viennes du ciel ou de l'enfer, qu'im-  
porte,  
O Beauté, monstre énorme, effrayant, ingénu,  
Si ton œil, ton souris, ton pied m'ouvre la  
porte  
D'un infini que j'aime et n'ai jamais connu?

At Tunis, not very long before the final catastrophe, Maupassant, visiting the Arab asylum, turns away "with a confused emotion, full of pity, or perhaps of envy, for some of the insane who, in the prison which is none to them, continue the dream they found one day in the bowl of a pipe stuffed with a pinch of yellow leaves." To such a temper was he brought by an indomitable will and an appetite which no daily bread could satisfy. With the fancies that sprang up in him, this polished Frenchman combined the literary manners which we suppose might prevail among Polynesians. He loved, no doubt, to be

poisoned by his own experiments in literature. But they have spread in France like wildfire. The editions of his books are sown broadcast; though, as we are glad to learn, the great European booksellers have begun of late to discover that, outside the French frontiers, their circulation is rapidly falling off. Perhaps the spirit of the decadence, like religious persecution, according to M. Paul Bert, is meant for home consumption, and cannot bear a long voyage. But at home it still puts forth a mighty "uncreating" power upon men and women. The "spirits that tend on mortal thoughts" seem, indeed, to have "made thick their blood," and stopped up "the access and passage to remorse." Such wholesale corruption ought to strike the coldest critic as portentous. And yet Swift's grim satire is more than justified; these things made the subject of prurient literature have called forth praise, as being "the productions of art and reason on our side of the globe"—they are "nature, realism, psychology," and therefore to be admired.

Maupassant tells us that he never coveted more than two pieces of statuary—one, the headless Venus of Syracuse, the other, a celebrated brazen ram in the museum at Palermo. They express to his mind, he says, with a half-mocking smile, "toute l'animalité du monde"—the stupid, unconscious beauty of the senses which no ideal comes to vex or trouble. He was quite right. All his philosophy may be fixed in these outward symbols of marble and bronze. Yet the tranquillity of the brute was lacking to him, as to the generation which he addressed and represented. Dreams still haunt them; phantoms pursue them. A dull or frantic sense awakens in them now and again, foreboding the ruin of the city which they have builded. Even the modern Parisian cannot sleep his sleep of the brute. To his cherished idols he has sacrificed freely. Religion, humanity, art, and whatsoever else may be lovely in men's eyes, he has cast upon the burning altar. It is not enough, so long as he remains alive himself, though but anemic and poisoned with morphine. From hour to hour, therefore, the cry goes up of a victim that has flung himself into the blaze. Yesterday it was Heine—now it is the turn of M. Guy de Maupassant, venal novelist and brilliant man of the world. To-morrow it will be another, with the like genius no less shamefully abused. For what else can happen in a society which has convinced itself of "the immense stupidity of all



things"? One may address it in words not unlike those which Billaud flung at Robespierre: "Avec ton être infâme tu commences à m'embêter." To Maupassant life was "an ignoble farce." Let us hear his poet once more, Norbert de Varennes, as he paces along the boulevards with Bel-Ami, "under the silent moon," and gives him the conclusion of the whole matter. "About the soul of every man," he says, "there is an eternal solitude. I look up into the sky; and it is empty. I find myself alone in the world, without father or mother, wife or child. I do not believe in resurrection or immortality. And I have no God."

But there is a conclusion of a far different kind which forces itself upon thoughtful minds, when they weigh and consider as "documents of civilization" the products of the French decadence. M. Renan, surely, is a witness beyond suspicion at the tribunal of "Liberalism" and "progress." Yet, in his latest volume, "Feuilles Détachées," M. Renan sounds the alarm, not once but often; he dares not prophesy smooth things for his countrymen who are showing, on every side, as he affirms, a notable decline in morality. "Sound literature," he protests, "is that which, when carried out in practice, makes a noble life." That of the seventeenth century was such—he means the classic achievements under Louis Quatorze. But "modern literature will not endure to be put to the touch." Evil days are in store for the nation. "It is certain," continues this by no means austere sage, "that moral values are losing ground; the spirit of self-sacrifice is almost extinct; and the day is approaching when everything will be done by a syndicate, and organized egoism will be set up instead of love and devotedness." Yet, as he clearly perceives, while the age has invented a mechanism which grows more perfect from hour to hour, men are blinding themselves to the fact, that even a perfect machinery, if it affects human interests, must imply "a certain degree of morality, conscience, and self-denial." Two institutions in France, the army and the Church, have hitherto resisted the torrent which is bearing society along; and they, says M. Renan, will speedily be carried away like the rest. Man is tormented by the need of an "eternal conscience." What, then, he inquires, will become of a democracy which has exhausted its religious belief, and does not look beyond the tomb? It will decline much lower than the present time; for when even "the shadow of the shade" has

vanished, an "immense moral, and perhaps intellectual, abasement," will be the inevitable consequence. M. Renan, who would fain be a laughing Silenus in his old age, is, therefore, as despondent as M. Bourget, who dreads that the "fatal incapacity of action" may follow upon the "incapacity to believe or to affirm," which is the prevalent disease in Frenchmen of genius. And M. de Vogüé, though aiming with his vigorous eloquence to persuade "the young men of twenty," that they ought to sacrifice their pessimism at the shrine of a social crusade, is still given over to the gloomiest apprehensions. The question which these eminent writers, and a hundred more, have constantly in their minds, is as momentous as it is practical. Will France survive? Or are we looking on at the suicide of *la grande nation*? Such is the problem in half-a-dozen words.

It affords, surely, a valid reason for consulting the omens; and, although it never can have been the pleasantest of tasks to inspect the "smoking entrails," as Virgil styles them, of sheep and oxen, yet no other way do we possess of learning what will be, than by carefully studying what is and has been. We would not deny (no, indeed!) that behind Paris there stands an inarticulate peasant France, which is too little civilized to be decadent. Nor do we reckon the literature of a people as equivalent to its life, as though there might not be a forced circulation of paper, without gold or even copper to redeem it on demand. But in Maupassant and his like we find evidence, which not the most stubborn optimist can rebut or refuse, that the upper and middle classes of the French have fallen into a most unhealthy condition. It is, we repeat, a decisive argument, a crucial test; and therefore we not only are justified, but are bound to apply it, be the nature of the investigation required as painful as our criticism has shown. For it is no light thing that France should disappear from the map of Europe. We put aside questions of sects and dynasties; we make no appeal to national prejudice or the inveterate suspicion bred of former wars. It is enough for us that a race and people, confessedly among the chosen of the world, with abounding gifts of mind and temperament, and an heroic past, should be thus imperilled, to excite our attention and kindle our sympathy. We look upon the tribe of Zolas, Renans, Bourgets, Daudets, and Maupassants, as among the most dangerous enemies that France has nourished in her bosom. Vain, utterly vain, it is to praise their skill in



the art of literature, their acquaintance with all manner of human passions, the vivid power of their brutality, or the melting charm of their putrescence. What arguments are these to address to a nation on the very edge of the abyss? And how shall we account of Englishmen (such as are not wanting), who can see in the wide plagues to which we have been calling our readers' notice, merely a feature of the moment, artistic trifling, and not the proof, as well as the symptom, that a process of death, moral, intellectual, and even physical, has set in among the French who have yielded to revolutionary principles? What is to be said of journals which advertise with the most careless air such authors as we have been compelled to denounce, and which extend to them a disinterested pity, if not a qualified admiration? Nothing will rouse men from their comfort or their lethargy but a violent shock. We dare not, indeed, attempt, in this Christian age, to write with the freedom of Juvenal, who had no worse portents to depict or to transfix than may be viewed, any day, in the world tenanted by the Maupassants. But while we have touched its hateful phenomena as lightly as was compatible with giving some true account of them, we would say that never was the lightning of indignation, human or divine, so justly called for as in the day on which we are writing, to sweep these abominations from the earth, and restore a great people to the place which still awaits them in the European comity, if they will choose less degraded teachers than they have lately gone after; if they will burn what they adore, and adore what they take an insane delight in burning. For without morality, no art or science, however advanced, will save them from ruin.

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From Temple Bar.

AUNT ANNE.

CHAPTER I.

MR. and Mrs. Walter Hibbert had been married just four months when Aunt Anne first appeared on the scene. They were at Brighton, whither they had gone from Friday to Tuesday, so that Mr. Hibbert might get braced up after a hard spell of work. Besides doing his usual journalism, he had been helping a friend with a popular educational weekly, and altogether "had slaved quite wickedly," so his wife said. But he had declared that,

though he found matrimony, as far as he had gone, very delightful, it had to be paid for, especially at the beginning of its career, when it ran into furniture, linen, plate, and expensive presents to a dear little wife, though the expensiveness of the last he generously kept to himself. So it resulted in the visit to Brighton. They spent the happiest four days in the world there, and felt quite sad when Tuesday morning arrived. But they wisely did their best to forget that the evening train would take them back to London, and resolved that their last day should pass merrily.

"Suppose we have a long, drowsy morning on the pier," she suggested; "nothing is nicer or more restful than to listen to the band and look down into the water. We needn't see the horrid people — indeed, if we sit on one of the end seats and keep our faces turned seawards, we can forget that they even exist."

Mr. Hibbert solemnly considered the proposal.

"The only drawback is the music, it makes so much noise — that's the worst of music, it always does," he said sadly. "Another thing is, that I cannot lie full length on the pier as I can on the beach."

"Very well, then we'll go to the beach. The worst of the beach is, that we can't look down into the water, as we can from the end of the pier."

"That's true; and then there are lots of pretty girls on the pier, and I like to see them, for then I know that there are some left — for the other fellows," he added nobly.

So they went to the pier, and sat on one of the side seats at the far end and looked down into the water, and blinked their happy eyes at the sunshine. And they felt as if all the beautiful world belonged to them, as if they two together were being drawn dreamily on and on into the sky, and sea, and light, to make one glorious whole with happy nature; but a whole in which they would be forever conscious of being together, and never less sleepy or blissful than now. This was Walter's idea, and he said it all in his dear romantic way that generally ended up with a laugh. "It would never do, you know, because we should get nothing to eat."

"Don't," she said. "That is so like you; you always spoil a beautiful idea, you provoking thing," and she rubbed her chin against the back of the seat and looked down more intently at the water. Without any one in the least suspecting it, he managed to stoop and kiss her hand,

while he pretended to be trying to see something, that of course was not there, at the top of a wave.

They were having a delightful morning, they lived in every moment of it, and wished it would never come to an end; still, when it did, there would be a delicious luncheon to go back to — very large prawns, roast chicken and green peas, and an enormous dish of ripe figs, which both their souls loved. After all, Walter thought, the world was not a bad place, especially when you had a wife who adored you and thought that everything you did bore the stamp of genius.

The band was playing a waltz, though to this day they do not know it. All manner of people were passing to and fro, but they did not notice them.

"I should like to stay here forever," Mrs. Hibbert said, with a sweet sigh of content. "Do you know, Walter," she went on suddenly, after a pause, "it will be four months to-morrow since we were married? Time seems to have flown."

"By Jove! it really is a miracle what those four months have done with themselves," he answered, looking up for a moment; as if to be sure that Time was not a conjuror standing before him about to hand the four months from beneath a handkerchief, with a polite bow and the remark that they would have to be lived through at the ordinary rate.

A spare-looking old lady, dressed in black, passed by, but he did not notice her.

"You see," he went on, with his eyes fixed on a sailing boat in the distance, "if things were always going to be —"

At the sound of his voice the lady in black, who was only a few yards off, stopped, listened, hesitated, and, turning back, stood before him. He recognized her in a moment.

"Aunt Anne!" he exclaimed. His voice was amiable, but embarrassed, as if he did not quite know what to do next.

"My dear Walter," she said, with a sigh and in a tone of great relief, "I am so glad to find you; I went to your lodgings, I saw your name and address in the visitors' list yesterday, but you were out; then I thought I might find you here. And this is your wife? My dear Florence, I am so glad to see you."

Till that moment Mrs. Walter Hibbert had never heard of the existence of Aunt Anne, but Aunt Anne had evidently heard of Mrs. Hibbert. She knew her Christian name, and called her by it as naturally as if she had been at her christening. She

stretched out a small hand covered with a black thread glove as she spoke, and held Florence's fingers affectionately in hers. Florence looked at her a little wonderingly. Aunt Anne was slight and old, nearly sixty perhaps. All over her face there were little lines that crossed and re-crossed, and branched off in every direction. She had grey hair, and small, dark eyes that blinked quickly and nervously; there appeared to be some trifling affection of the left eye, for now and then, as if by accident, it winked at you. The odd thing was that, in spite of her evident tendency to nervous excitement, her shabby black satin dress, almost threadbare shawl, and cheap gloves, there was an air of dignity about the spare old lady, and something like determination in her kindly voice that, joined to her impulsive tenderness, made you quickly understand she would be a very difficult person to oppose.

"Dear boy," she said gently to Walter, "why didn't you write to me when you were married? You know how glad I should have been to hear of your happiness."

"Why didn't you write to me, Aunt Anne?" he asked, gaily turning the tables.

"Yes, I ought to have done so. You must forgive me, dears, for being so remiss," she said, looking at them both, "and believe me that it was from no lack of affection. But," she went on quickly, "we must not waste our time. You are coming to Rottingdean with me, and at once. Mr. Baines is longing to see you both."

"But we can't go now, Aunt Anne," Walter declared in his kindest manner; "we must get back to the lodgings. We told them to have luncheon ready at one o'clock, and to-night we go home. Couldn't you come and lunch with us?"

"My dear Walter," she said, with a look of dismay and in a voice that was almost pained, "what would your uncle say? I could not possibly return without you."

"But he has never seen me, Aunt Anne."

"That is one reason why he would never forgive me if I did not take you back."

"But it is so far, we should be all day getting there," Walter objected a little helplessly, for he felt already that Aunt Anne would carry her point.

"It is only to Rottingdean" — she spoke with hurt surprise — "and we will drive. I saw a beautiful fly as I was coming on to the pier, and engaged it; I know

you too well, my darling, to think you will refuse me."

Her manner had changed in a moment; she said the last words with soft triumph, and looked at Florence. The sight of the young wife seemed to be too much for her; there was something like a tear in the left eye, the one that winked, when she spoke again.

"I must give her a kiss," she said tenderly, and putting out her arms she gathered the girl to her heart. "But we must make haste," she went on quickly, hurrying over the fag end of her embrace, as if she had not time to indulge in her feeling, much as she desired to do so. "Mr. Baines will wonder what has happened to us. He is longing to see you;" and without their knowing it, she almost chased them along the pier.

Then Walter, thinking of the prawns and the chicken, and the large dish of ripe green figs, made a wild struggle to get free.

"But really, Aunt Anne," he said firmly, "we must go back to the lodgings. Come and lunch with us now, and let us go to see Mr. Baines another time; I dare say we shall be at Brighton again soon. We will make a point of coming now that we know you are here, won't we, Floggie?" and he appealed feebly to his wife.

"Yes, indeed we will," Florence said.

"Dear children," Aunt Anne laughed, "I shall not let you escape now that I have found you." There was an unexpected brightness in her manner, but there was no intention of letting them go.

"Besides, there may be important letters at the lodgings, and I ought to do a bit of work;" but there was evident invention in Walter's voice, and she did not slacken her pace. Still, as if she wanted him to know that she saw through his excuses, she looked at him reproachfully, and with a determination that did not falter.

"It would be impossible for me to return without you," she said; "he would never forgive me. Besides, dear children, you don't know what a pleasure it is to see you. I could not let you go just yet. My heart gave a bound as I recognized Walter's voice," she went on, turning to Florence; "he is so like what his dear father used to be. I knew him directly."

They were already by the turnstile. They felt helpless. The old lady with the thin shoulders and the black shawl loosely floating behind seemed to be their master; they were like children doing as they were told.

"Here is the fly. Get in, my darlings," she said triumphantly, and Florence meekly took her place. "Get in, dear Walter," she repeated with decision, "I will follow; get in," and he too obeyed. Another moment and they were going towards Rottingdean.

The old lady looked relieved and pleased when they were on their way.

"It is a lovely drive," she said, "and it will do you far more good than sitting on the pier. I am so glad to have you with me, dear children." She seemed to delight in calling them children, and it was odd, but each time that she said the word it seemed to give her a stronger hold on them. She turned to Florence.

"Are your father and mother quite well, my dear?" she asked.

Walter put his hand on his wife's.

"She only has a mother," he said gently.

Aunt Anne looked quite penitent. She winked with her left eye and was silent for a moment or two, almost as if she meditated shedding a tear for the defunct father of the niece by marriage whom she had never seen in her life before to-day. Suddenly she turned the subject so grotesquely that they nearly laughed.

"Are you fond of chocolates, my darling?"

"Yes —" Florence hesitated a minute and then said softly:—

"Yes, Aunt Anne, very" — she had not had occasion to give the old lady any name in the few words she had spoken previously.

"Dear child, I knew you would be," Aunt Anne said, and from under her shawl she produced a box covered with white satin paper and having on its lid a very bright picture of a very smart lady. "I bought that box of chocolates for you as I came along. I thought Florence would be like the picture on the lid," she added, turning to her nephew; "and she is, don't you think so, Walter dear?"

"Yes, Aunt Anne, she is," he answered, and he looked fondly at his wife and drew up his lips a little bit in a manner that Florence knew meant, in the language only she and he in all the wide world understood, that in his thoughts he kissed her.

Aunt Anne was a dear old lady, Florence thought, and of course she liked, and always would like, any relation of Walter's; still, she did so wish that on this particular day, their last by the sea together, Aunt Anne had kept her distance. Walter was so pale when they left

town, but since Friday, with nothing to do but to get brown in the sun, he had been looking better and handsomer every day, and this last one they had longed to enjoy in their own lazy way; and now all their little plans were spoilt. To-morrow he would be at his office; it was really too bad, though it was ungrateful to think it, perhaps, with the remembrance of Aunt Anne's embrace fresh upon her, and the box of chocolates on her lap. Still, after all, she felt justified, for she knew that Walter was raging inwardly, and that if they were alone he would use some short but very effective words to describe his own feeling in respect to the turning up of Aunt Anne. Only he was so good, so gentle, and considerate, that, no matter what his thoughts might be, she knew he would not let Aunt Anne feel how much her kindness bothered him.

Meanwhile, they jogged along in the open fly towards Rottingdean. A long, even road, with a view on the right of the open sea, on the left alternate high hedges and wide meadows. The grass on the cliffs was green; among the grass were little footpaths made by wandering feet that had diverged from the main road. Florence followed the little tracks with her eyes; she thought of footpaths like them far away, not by the sea, but among the hanging woods of Surrey. She and Walter had sauntered along them less than a year ago. She thought of home, of the dear mother busy with her household duties, making time in between them to write to the boys in India; of the dear, noisy boys who suddenly grew to be young men and vanished into the whirl of life; of the dirty old pony carriage in which she had loved to drive her sweetheart; and when she got to this point her thoughts came to a full stop to think more particularly of the pony. His name was Moses, and he had liked being kissed and eating sugar. She remembered, with a pang of self-reproach, that in the last months before her marriage she used to forget to kiss Moses, though she often stood absently stroking his patient nose. She had sometimes even forgotten his morning lump of sugar in the excitement of reading the letter that the early post never failed to bring.

"Are you fond of scenery, dear?" Aunt Anne asked.

With a start Florence looked round at the old lady, at Walter, at the shabby lining of the fly.

"Yes, very," she answered.

"I knew it by the expression of your

face when you looked at the sea. Mr. Baines says it is a lovely view."

Why should Mr. Baines be quoted, Florence wondered. She looked again — an open sea, a misty horizon, a blue sky, and the sun shining. A fine sea-view, certainly, and a splendid day, but scenery was hardly the term to apply to the distance beside them.

"Is Mr. Baines very fond of the sea?" she asked. She saw that Aunt Anne was waiting for her to speak, and she said the first words that presented themselves.

"Yes, my love, he delights in scenery. You must call him Uncle Robert, Florence. He would be deeply wounded to hear you say Mr. Baines. Neither he nor I could think of Walter's wife as anything but our niece. You will remember, won't you, my love?" Aunt Anne spoke in the gentle but authoritative voice which was, as they had already found, difficult to resist.

"Yes, Aunt Anne, of course I will if you wish it; it was only because as yet I do not know him."

"But you soon will know him, my love," the old lady answered confidently; "and when you do, you will feel that neither he nor I could think of Walter's wife except to love her. Dear child, how fond he will be of you." And she put her hand affectionately on Florence's while she turned to Walter and asked suddenly:—

"Walter, dear, have you got a white silk handkerchief for your neck?"

He looked at her for a moment almost puzzled, wondering whether she wanted to borrow one, and if it was for a conjuring trick.

"No, Aunt Anne, I fear I have not."

Aunt Anne dived down into her pocket and pulled out a little soft packet. "I thought you wouldn't have one," she said joyfully, "so I bought this for you just now;" and she tucked the little parcel into his hand. It took him by surprise, he did not know what to say. He felt like the schoolboy she seemed to take him for, and a schoolboy's awkwardness overtook him; he smiled, nodded mysteriously, and put the handkerchief into his pocket. His manner delighted Mrs. Baines.

"He is just the same," she said to Florence; "I remember him so well when he was only ten years old. He had the most lovely eyes I ever saw. Do you remember my going to see your father? Ah! we have reached the hill, that's why he's going so slowly," she exclaimed excitedly. "We shall be there in five minutes. Now

we are close to the village. Drive through

the street, coachman," she called out, "past the church, and a little way on you will see a house standing back from the road with a long garden in front and a white gate. Florence dear," she asked, still keeping her eyes fixed on the driver, "do you like preserve?"

"Like—do you mean jam?" Florence asked, bewildered by another sudden question.

"Yes, my love, preserve," Aunt Anne answered pointedly, as if she resented the use of the shorter word.

"Yes, I like it very much," her newly found niece said humbly.

"We have quantities of fruit in our garden, and have been preserving it all the week. It is not very firm yet, but you must have some to take back with you."

"I am afraid we shall hardly be able to carry it——" Florence began timidly, feeling convinced that if she were made to carry jam to London it would be fatal to the rest of her luggage.

"I will pack it for you myself," Aunt Anne said firmly. She was watching the driver too intently to say more. She did not speak again till they had driven down the one street of Rottingdean, past the newly built cottages and the church, and appeared to be getting into a main road again. Then suddenly she rose triumphantly from her seat. "There it is, coachman, that little cottage to the left. Dear Walter—how pleased your uncle will be. Here it is, dears," and all her kindly face lighted up with satisfaction as they stopped before a small, whitewashed cottage with a long garden in front and a bed of lupins at the side. Florence noticed that the garden, stretching far behind, was full of fruit trees, and that a pear-tree rubbed against the sides of the house.

The old lady got out of the fly slowly, she handed out her niece and nephew; the latter was going to pay the driver, but she pushed away his hand, then stood for a moment feeling absently in her pocket. After a moment she looked up and said in an abstracted voice, "Walter dear, you must settle with the flyman when you go back to Brighton; he is paid by the hour and will wait for you, my darlings;" and she turned towards the gate. "Come," she said, "I must present you to your uncle, Robert," she called, "are you there?" She walked along the pathway with a quick, determined step a little in advance of her visitors; when she reached the house she stood still, looking in but hesitating to enter. Florence and Walter

overtaking her saw that the front door opened into a room simply, almost poorly, furnished, with many photographs dotted about the walls, and a curious arrangement of quartz and ferns in one corner. While Mrs. Baines stood irresolute, there came round the house from the right a little shabby-looking maidservant. Her dress was dirty, and she wore a large cap on her untidy head.

"Emma," said Aunt Anne in the condescending voice of one who struggled, but unsuccessfully, to forget her own superior condition in life, "where is your master?"

"I don't know, mum, but I think he's tying up the beans."

"Have you prepared luncheon?"

The girl looked up in surprise she evidently did not dare express, and answered in the negative.

"Then go and do so immediately."

"But please, mum, what am I to put on the table?" asked the girl, bewildered.

"Put!" exclaimed the old lady, "why, the cold pie, and the preserved cranberries, of course, and the honey and the buns."

Florence thought that it sounded like the oddest meal in the world.

"I think we had better return, I do indeed, Aunt Anne, if you will kindly let us," urged Walter, thinking regretfully of the chicken.

Aunt Anne waved her hand.

"Walter," she answered grandly, "you shall not go until you have partaken of our hospitality. I wish it were a thousand times better than it is," she added, with a pathetic note in her voice that found their hearts directly.

Walter put his hand on her shoulder like the simple, affectionate fellow that he was, and Florence hastened to say heartily:—

"It sounds delightful, dear Aunt Anne; it is only that we——" and then there came slouching round the left side of the house a tall, ungainly-looking man of about sixty, a man with a brown beard and brown trousers, carrying in his hand a newspaper. He looked at Walter and at Florence in almost stupid surprise, and turned from them with a grunt.

"Anne," he said crossly, "where have you been? I have wasted all my morning looking for you; you knew those scarlet runners wanted tying up, and the sun-flowers trimming. Who are these?" he asked, nodding at his visitors as coolly as if they had been out of hearing; "and what is that fly doing at the gate?"

"Why, I have been to Brighton, of



course," Aunt Anne answered bravely, lifting her head and looking him in the face, but there was a quaver of something like fear in her voice; "I told you I was going; I went by the omnibus."

"What did you go to Brighton for? you were there only last week." He lowered his voice and asked again, "Who are these?"

"Robert, I told you yesterday that Walter Hibbert's name was in the visitors' list in the paper, and that I was longing to see him and his wife," she answered sharply, but still with dignity—it was doubtful which of the two was master—"so of course I went off this morning to fetch them. I knew how glad you would be to see them."

The maid inside, laying the cloth in the whitewashed sitting-room, stopped clattering the forks and spoons to hear what was going on and to look through the open window. Aunt Anne noticed it in a moment, and turning to her said sternly:—

"Emma, proceed with your work. I told you," she went on, again speaking to her husband, "that these dear children were at Brighton. I have brought them back, Robert, to introduce them to you. They have been looking forward to it."

He gave another grunt, and smiled an awkward smile that seemed forced from him, and shook his awkward shoulders.

"Oh, that's it," he said; "well, you had better come in and have something to eat," and he led the way into the cottage.

Aunt Anne entirely recovered herself the moment she was under her own roof. "He is so forgetful," she said softly, "but he has really been longing to see you;" and she touched his arm; "I told them how glad you would be to see them, Robert," she said appealingly, as if she felt quite certain that he would remember his gladness in a moment or two, and wondered if it was yet flowing into his heart. "Dear Florence, you must ask him to show you his botanical specimens; he has a wonderful collection."

"We will," said Walter good-humoredly. "And now you must excuse me for a few minutes, dears. I know how much your uncle will enjoy a talk with you," and, to the dismay of the Hibberts, Aunt Anne vanished, leaving them alone with the brown man.

Mr. Baines sat slowly down on the arm-chair, the only really comfortable one in the room, and stretched out his left leg in a manner that showed it was stiff. Then he looked at his visitors almost grimly, yet with a suggestion of odd amusement

on his face, as if he knew perfectly how awkward they felt.

"Sit down, Mrs. Hibbert," he said, nodding towards an ordinary chair and including Walter in the nod. "I dare say you'll be glad of your food before you look at specimens. I shall," and he gave a lumbering laugh. "I have done a hard morning's work."

"I am sure you must be very tired," Florence said politely, wishing Aunt Anne would return.

He seemed to know her thoughts, and answered them in an explanatory manner: "Anne won't be long. She always dresses before we have dinner. Great nonsense, living as we do; but it's no use my speaking. Do you make a long stay in Brighton, Mr. Hibbert?"

"No, we go back to town to-night."

"A good thing," he said, with another awkward laugh; "Brighton is a horrible place to my mind, and the sooner one leaves it the better. That pier, with its band and set of idle people, with nothing else to do but to walk up and down; well, it's my opinion that railways have done a vast deal of mischief and mighty little good to make up for it. The same thing can be said of newspapers. What good do they do?"

Walter felt that this sudden turn upon the press was a little hard on him, but he looked up over his moustache with laughter in his eyes, and wondered what would come next. Florence was almost angry. Aunt Anne's husband was very rude, she thought, and she determined to come to the rescue.

"But you were reading a paper," she said, and tried to see the name of one that Mr. Baines had thrown down beside his chair.

"Oh, yes; I like to try to find out what mischief they are going to do next. If I had my way they should only be published monthly, if at all. All they do is to try to set people by the ears."

"But they tell us the news."

"Well, and what better are we for that? I don't want to know that a man was hanged last week, and a prince will be married to-morrow; I only waste my time reading about them when I might be usefully employed minding my own business. Oh, here's Anne; now we had better go and eat."

With the aid of a stick he shuffled out of the chair and went towards the table. Walter made a feint of offering his help.

"I am all right once I am on my feet," said Mr. Baines.



Florence and Walter were astonished when they looked at Aunt Anne. They hardly knew her again. The shabby black shawl had vanished, the dusty bonnet was replaced by a soft white cap; there was lace at her throat fastened by a little crinkly gold brooch, having a place for hair in the middle; her satin dress trailed an inch or two on the ground behind, and she had put a red carnation in her bosom almost coquettishly.

"Now, dears," she said, with a smile of welcome that was fascinating from its absolute genuineness, "I shall be truly hurt if you fail to do justice to our simple repast"—and she sat down with an air of old-fashioned stateliness as if she were heading a banquet table. "Sit down dears. Robert, you must have Florence on your right hand."

The Hibberts took their places merrily, their spirits reviving now that they were no longer alone with their host. Aunt Anne, too, looked so picturesque sitting there in the little summer-like room, with the garden beyond, that they could not help being glad they had come. They felt that they were living a distinct day in their lives, and not one that afterwards in looking back they would find difficult to sort out from a hundred others like it.

Even Mr. Baines grew less grumpy, and offered presently to show them the garden.

"And the plum-trees and the pear-trees," said Aunt Anne; "and the view from the summer-house in the corner."

"Oh, yes," her husband said, "we'll show them all;" and he helped to do the honors of the table with what he evidently intended to be genial courtesy.

"It does my heart good to see you, dears," Aunt Anne said as she insisted on helping them to an enormous quantity of stewed cranberries.

"And it does us good to be here," they answered, forgetting all their vexation at losing a day by the sea; forgetting even the poor chicken that was being roasted in vain, and the waiting fly to be paid for at so much an hour.

"Walter dear," Mrs. Hibbert said, as they drove back to Brighton, carefully balancing on their knees four large pots of jam, while they also kept an eye on an enormous nosegay badly tied up, that wobbled about on the back seat, "Mr. Baines didn't seem to know you when we arrived."

"He had never set eyes on me before. Aunt Anne only set eyes on him five years ago. He was rather a grumpy beggar. I

wonder who the deuce he was. We none of us ever knew."

"He didn't know you are a journalist, I think."

"No, I suppose not. I wonder if he ever did anything for a living himself." Then as if he repented saying anything that sounded unkind of a man whose salt he had just eaten, he added, "But you can never tell what people are from their talk the first time you see them. He is not unlike a man I knew some years ago, who was a great inventive genius. He used to shuffle about in shoes too big for him just as this beggar did."

"I felt quite frightened when he first came round the corner."

"You see it was rough upon him having his morning spoilt. A man who lives in the country like that generally gets wrapped-up in his surroundings. I suppose I must have known that Aunt Anne was at Rottingdean," he went on; "but if so, I had forgotten it. She quarrelled with my father and every one else because she was always quite unable to keep any money. There was a great deliberation in the family a few years ago, when it was announced that Aunt Anne was destitute and no one wanted to keep her."

"But had she no money of her own?"

"She had a little, but she lived on the capital till it was gone, and there was an end of that. Then suddenly she married Mr. Baines. I don't know who he was, but she met him at a railway-station. He had a bad headache, I believe, and she thought he was ill and went up to him and offered him some smelling-salts."

"Why, it was quite romantic," Florence exclaimed.

Walter had a curious way of looking up when he was amused, and he looked up in that curious way now.

"Do go on," she said.

"I don't know any more except that somehow they got married, and she turned up to-day as you saw; and I wish she hadn't given us any jam; confound it. I say, darling, let's throw it over that hedge."

"Oh, I wouldn't for the world," Florence said. "It would be so unkind. She was a dear old lady, Walter, and I am glad we went to see her. She asked for our address in London, and said she would write to us."

But Aunt Anne did not write for a long time, and then it was only to condole with Walter on the death of his father. The first year after their visit to Rottingdean

she sent a large Christmas card inscribed to "My dear Walter and Florence, from Aunt Anne;" but the second year even this was omitted. It was not until Mr. and Mrs. Hibbert had been married nearly seven years that Aunt Anne again appeared before them.

#### CHAPTER II.

MANY things had happened to Mr. and Mrs. Hibbert in those seven years. Most important of all—to themselves, at least—was the birth of their two children, lovely children Mrs. Hibbert declared them to be, and in his heart her husband agreed with her. But the time came when Walter found to his dismay that even lovely children would sometimes cry, and that as they grew older they wanted room to run about with that delightful patter-pattering sound that is usually more musical to a mother's ear than to a father's, especially when he has to produce intelligible copy. So the Hibberts moved away from the little flat in which they had begun their married life, to an ugly little upright house sufficiently near Portland Road to enable Walter to get quickly to the office. There a nursery could be made at the top of the house, where the children were not only out of sight, but out of hearing.

Walter did a great deal of work and was fairly well paid, but that did not mean a large income for a young couple with two children and three servants, trying to keep up an appearance before the world. He wrote for magazines and literary journals, occasionally he did a long pot-boiler for one of those reviews he called refuges for destitute intellects, and altogether was thrown much among men better off than himself, so that he did not like to look poor. Besides, he preferred to live with a certain amount of comfort even though it meant a certain amount of anxiety, to looking poverty-stricken or shabby for the sake of knowing precisely how he would stand at the end of the quarter, or being able at any moment to lay his hand on a ten-pound note.

"You not only feel awkward yourself if you look poor, but cause other people to feel so," he said; "and that is making yourself a nuisance; and you have no business to do that if you can avoid it."

So, though the Hibberts had only a small house, it was pretty and well arranged. Their simple meals were daintily served, and everything about them had an air that implies content dashed with luxury. In fact they lived as people can live now, even on a small income, and espe-

cially in London, in comfort and refinement.

Still, it was a difficult task to pull through, and Walter felt that he ought to be making more money. He knew, too, though he did not tell his wife so, that the constant work and anxiety were telling on him; he wanted another but a far longer bracing-up than the one he had had seven years ago at Brighton. "A sea-voyage would be the thing," he thought, "only I don't see how it could be managed, even if I could get away."

The last year had been a fortunate one in some respects: an aunt of Mrs. Hibbert's had died, leaving them a hundred pounds and a furnished cottage near Witley in Surrey. It was a dear little cottage, they both protested—red brick, of course, as all well-bred cottages are nowadays, standing in an acre and a half of its own fir wood, and having round it a garden with tan paths and those prim flowers that grow best in the vicinity of fir. It would be delightful to stay there in the summer holidays, they agreed, or to run down from Saturday to Monday, or by and by to send the children there for a spell with the governess when their parents were not able to get away from town. Walter had tried sending Florence and the children and going down every week himself, but he found "it didn't work." She was always longing to be with him, and he with her. It was only a broad sea and a few thousand miles that would make separation possible, and he did not think he could endure that very long; he was absurdly fond of his dear little wife.

All this he thought over as he walked along the Strand one morning towards Fleet Street and his office. He was going to see his chief who had sent for him on a matter of business. His chief was Mr. Fisher, an excellent editor, though not quite enough of a partisan perhaps to have a strong following. The *Centre* was a model of fairness and the mainstay of that great section of the reading public that likes its news trustworthy and copious, but has no pronounced party leanings. Still, if it was a paper without political influence, it was one of great political use, for it invariably stated a question from all points of view with equal fairness, though it leant, if at all, from sheer editorial generosity, towards making the best of it for the weakest side. Thus a minority looked to it almost as to an advocate, and the majority knew that any strength that was against them would be set forth in the *Centre*, and that if none was pleaded

there, the right and the triumph were together. Mr. Fisher liked Walter Hibbert; and though by tacit agreement their relations inside the office were purely formal, outside they were more intimate. Occasionally they took the form of a quiet dinner, or a few hours in the little house near Portland Road, where Florence contributed a good deal to her husband's popularity.

As he walked along the Strand that morning, Walter meditated on many ways of improving his condition and at the same time of not overworking himself. He found that it told on him considerably to be down late at the office three nights a week, doing his article, and then, with the excitement of work still upon him, to go home tired and hungry in the small hours of the morning. It was bad for Florence too, for she generally sat up for him, declaring that to taste his supper and to have a little chat with him did her good and made her heart light. Sometimes he thought he would take up a different line altogether (he knew his editor would aid and abet him in anything for his good) and try living in the country, and running up to town every day if necessary. But this would never do, it would only make him restive. His position was not yet strong enough to admit of taking things so easily. It was important to him to live among men of knowledge and influence, to be in the whirl and twirl of things, and London was essentially the bull's-eye, not only of wealth and commerce, but of most other things with which men of all degrees concern themselves.

And when he got to this point he came to the conclusion that he was thinking too much about himself. After all he only wanted a month's rest or a couple of months' change of air; a friendly talk such as he might possibly get in the next quarter of an hour would probably bring about either and in a far better form than he himself could devise it. Mr. Fisher was a man of infinite resource, not merely in regard to his paper, but for himself and his friends too, when they consulted him about their personal affairs. It was one of his characteristics that he liked being consulted. Walter felt that the best thing would be to get away alone with Florence, to some place where the climate had no cause to be ashamed of itself; he wanted to be satiated with sunshine. It was no good going alone, and no matter how pleasant a friend went with him, a time always came when he wanted to go by one route and the friend by another. "Now, your wife,"

he thought, "not only particularly longs to go by your route, but thinks you a genius for finding it out."

He stopped for a moment to look at a bookshop; there was a box of second-hand books outside; he hesitated, but remembered that he had no time to stay. As he turned away some one touched him on the arm, and a voice said doubtfully:—

"Will you speak to me, Walter?" He looked up and instantly held out his hand with a smile.

"Why, it's Wimple," he said; "how are you, old fellow? Of course I'll speak to you. How are you?"

The man who had stopped him was about eight-and-twenty, he was tall and thin, his legs were too long and very rickety. To look at he was not prepossessing; he had a pinky complexion, pale reddish hair, and small, round, dark eyes with light lashes and weak lids. On either side of his face there were some straggling whiskers; his lips were thin and his whole expression very grave. His voice was low but firm in its tone, as though he wished to convey that even in small matters it would be useless to contradict him. He wore rather shabby, dark clothes, his thin overcoat was unbuttoned and showed that the undercoat was faced with watered silk that had worn a little shiny; attached to his waistcoat was a watchguard made of brown hair ornamented here and there with bright gold clasps. He did not look strong or very flourishing. He was fairly gentleman-like, but only fairly so, and he did not look very agreeable. The apparent weakness of his legs seemed to prevent him from walking uprightly; he looked down a good deal at the toes of his boots, which were well polished. The oddest thing about him was that with all his unprepossessing appearance he had a certain air of sentiment; occasionally a sentimental tone stole into his voice, but he carefully repressed it. Walter remembered the moment he looked at him that the brown hair watchguard had been the gift of a pretty girl, the daughter of a tailor to whom he had made love as if in compensation for not paying her father's bill. He wondered how it had ended, whether the girl had broken her heart for him or found him out. But the next moment he hated himself for his ungenerous thoughts, and forcing them back spoke in as friendly a voice as he could manage. "It's ages since we came across each other," he said, "and I should not have seen you just now if you had not seen me."

"I wasn't sure whether you would speak to me," Mr. Wimple said solemnly as they went towards Fleet Street together, and then almost hurriedly, as if to avoid thinking about unpleasant things, he asked, "How is your wife?"

"All right, thank you. But how are you, and how are you getting on?"

"I am not at all well, Walter" — Mr. Wimple coughed, as if to show that he was delicate — "and my uncle has behaved shamefully to me."

"Why, what has he done?" Walter asked, wishing that he felt more cordial, for he had known Alfred Wimple longer almost than he had known any one. Old acquaintance was not to be lightly put aside. It constituted a claim in Walter's eyes as strong as did relationship, though it was only when the claim was made on him, and never when he might have pressed it for his own advantage, that he remembered this.

"Done! why, he has turned me out of his office, just because he wanted to make room for the son of a rich client, for nothing else in the world."

"That was rough," Walter answered, thinking almost against his will that Wimple had never been very accurate and that this account was possibly not a fair one. "What excuse did he make?"

"He said my health was bad, that I was not strong enough to do the work, and had better take a few months' holiday. It is quite true about my health. I am very delicate, Walter." He turned, and looked at his friend with round, dark eyes that seemed to have no pupils to them, as though he wanted to see the effect of his statement. "I must take a few months' rest."

"Then perhaps he was right after all. But can you manage the few months' rest?" Walter asked, hesitating, for he knew the question was expected from him. In old days he had had so much to do with Wimple's affairs that he did not like to ignore them altogether.

"He makes me an allowance, of course, but it's not sufficient," Alfred Wimple answered reluctantly; "I wanted him to keep my post open for a few months, but he refused, though he's the only relation I have."

"Well, but he has been pretty good," Walter said, in a pacific voice, "and perhaps he thinks you really want rest. It's not bad of him to make you an allowance. It's more than any one would do for me if I had to give up work for a bit."

"He only does it because he can't well

refuse, and it's a beggarly sum, after all." To which Walter answered nothing. He had always felt angry with himself for not liking Alfred better; they were such very old friends. They had been schoolfellows long ago, and afterwards, when Walter was at Cambridge and Alfred was an articled clerk in London (he was by three years the younger of the two), there had been occasions when they had met and spent many pleasant hours together. To do Walter justice, it had always been Alfred who had sought him and not he who had sought Alfred, for in spite of the latter's much professed affection Walter never wholly trusted him; he hated himself for it, but the fact remained. "The worst of Alfred is, that he lies," he had said to himself long ago. He remembered his own remark to-day with a certain amount of reproach, but he knew that he had not been unjust; still, after all, he thought it was not so very great a crime; many people lied nowadays, sometimes without being aware of it. He was inclined to think that he had been rather hard on Alfred, who had been very constant to him. Besides, Wimple had been unlucky; he had been left a penniless lad to the care of an uncle, a rich city solicitor, who had not appreciated the charge; he had never had a soul who cared for him, and must have been very miserable and lonely at times. If he had had a mother or sister, or any one at all to look after him, he might have been different. Then too Walter remembered that once when he was very ill in the vacation it was Alfred who had turned up and nursed him with almost a woman's anxiety. A kindness like that made a link too strong for a few disagreeables to break. He could not help thinking that he was a brute not to like his old friend better.

"I am sorry things are so bad with you, old man; you must come and dine and talk them over."

Mr. Wimple looked him earnestly in the face.

"I don't like to come," he said, in a half-ashamed, half-pathetic voice; "I behaved so badly to you about that thirty pounds, but luck was against me."

"Never mind, you shall make it all right when luck is with you," Walter answered cheerfully, determined to forget all unpleasant bygones. "Why not come to-night? we shall be alone."

Mr. Wimple shook his head.

"No, not to-night," he said; "I am not well, and I am going down to the country till Wednesday; it will do me good." A

little smile hovered round his mouth as he added, "Some nice people in Hampshire have asked me to stay with them."

"In Hampshire. Whereabouts in Hampshire?"

There was a certain hesitation in Mr. Wimple's manner as he answered:—

"You don't know them, and I don't suppose you ever heard of the place, Walter; it is called Liphook."

"Liphook, why of course I know it, it is on the Portsmouth line; we have a cottage, left us by my wife's aunt only last year, which is in the same direction, only nearer town. How long are you going to stay there?"

"Till Wednesday. I will come and dine with you on Thursday, if you will have me."

"All right, old man, 7.30. Perhaps you had better tell me where to write in case I have to put you off for business reasons."

Mr. Wimple hesitated a minute, and then gave his London address, adding that he should be back on Wednesday night or Thursday morning at latest. They were standing by the newspaper office.

"Do you think there might be anything I could do here?" he asked, nodding at the poster outside the door; "I might review legal books or something of that sort."

"I expect Fisher has a dozen men ready for anything at a moment's notice," Walter answered, "but I'll put in a word for you if I get the chance;" and with a certain feeling of relief he shook his friend's hand and rushed up-stairs. The atmosphere seemed a little clearer when he was alone. "I'll do what I can for him," he thought, "but I can't stand much of his company. There is a want of fresh air about him that bothers me so. Perhaps he could do a legal book occasionally, he used to write rather well. I'll try what can be done."

But his talk with Mr. Fisher was so important to himself and so interesting in many ways that he forgot all about Alfred until he was going out of the door; and then it was too late to speak about him. Suddenly a happy thought struck him—Mr. Fisher was to dine with Walter next week, he would ask him for Thursday. Then if he liked Alfred it might go all right. He remembered, too, that Alfred always dressed carefully and looked his best in the evening and laid himself out to be agreeable.

"By the way, Fisher, I wonder if you

would come on Thursday instead of on Wednesday. I expect an old friend and should like you to meet him; he is clever and rather off luck just now; of course you'll get your chat with my wife all right—in fact better if there are one or two people to engross me."

"Very well, Thursday if you like; it will do equally well for me; I am free both evenings as far as I know."

"Agreed then," and Walter went down the office stairs pleased at his own success.

"That horrid Mr. Wimple will spoil our dinner; I never liked him," Florence exclaimed when she heard of the arrangement.

"I know you didn't, and I don't like him either, which is mean of me, for he's a very old friend."

"But if we neither of us like him, why should we inflict him on our lives?"

"We won't; we'll cut him as soon as he has five hundred a year; but it wouldn't be fair to do so just now when he's down on his luck; he and I have been friends too long for that."

"But not very great friends?"

"Perhaps not; but we won't throw him over in bad weather—try and be a little nice to him to please me, there's a dear Floggie," which instantly carried the day. "You had better ask Ethel Dunlop; Fisher is fond of music, and she will amuse him when he is tired of flirting with you," Walter suggested.

"He'll never tire of that," she laughed, "but I'll invite her if you like. She can sing while you talk to Mr. Wimple and your editor discusses European politics with me."

"He'll probably discuss politics outside Europe, if he discusses any," her husband answered; "things look very queer in the East."

"They always do," she said wisely, "but I believe it's all nonsense, and only our idea because we live so far off."

"You had better tell Fisher to send me out to see."

"Us, you mean."

"No, me. They wouldn't stand you, dear," and he looked at her anxiously; "I shouldn't be much surprised if he asked me to go for a bit—indeed, I think he has an idea of it."

"Oh, Walter, it would be horrible."

"Not if it did me good; sometimes I think I need a thorough change."

She looked at him for a moment.

"No, not then," she answered.



From Blackwood's Magazine.  
SKETCHES FROM EASTERN TRAVEL.

## XIII.

THE SYRIAN DESERT, FROM DAMASCUS  
TO KARYATEN.

It is the first of May. Behold our travellers bidding a last farewell to Damascus, with its shady gardens and cool, clear streams of water, its crowded bazaars (resplendent with rich silken stuffs of all the colors of the rainbow, and more especially stocked to overflowing with an endless variety of delectable sweetmeats), and lastly its pale-faced inhabitants, richly robed, but sad of countenance through this moon of Ramadan, fasting from dawn to sunset, and feasting by night. Behold the familiar cavalcade threading its way through those same bazaars—narrow streets which scarcely allow room for the riders to pass between the "shops" on each side, so that the horses have to pick their way among the goods set out for sale.

At last the city is left behind, and through its belt of shady gardens the procession winds on to the open plain beyond. The travellers present a more picturesque appearance than hitherto, for (rightly judging that no amount of muslin puggarees will avail against the power of desert suns) they have provided themselves with huge *kefiyehs* of gorgeous Damascus silks, which, bound round their hats, shade the eyes, and fall over the shoulders in protecting folds. The cavalcade is now headed by the stately figure of Sheikh Nasr ibn Abdullah, his dark eyes sparkling as he feels his steed bound beneath him, and scents afar off the air of the desert. Truly it is a goodly sight to see the dark-robed sheikh galloping across the plain, sometimes (with one hand on his horse's mane) bending to the ground, and, without drawing rein, picking some flower which he gravely presents to one or other of the ladies. And whithersoever goes the son of Abdullah thither follows him Sheikh 'Ali, his cousin and attendant. Pronounce not his name, good reader, without due attention to the apostrophe. It symbolizes an Arabic consonant which the sister explains to represent the sound heard between two consecutive bleats of a camel. "So now you know how to pronounce his name," says she; "but for my part I shall call him the Man with the Eyes. His face is so muffled up that nothing but his eyes is visible, and such quick, penetrating, observant eyes I never beheld in my life. He notices every blade of grass,

every stone, every lizard, every everything!"

"He is a very uncanny personage!" exclaims Philippa—"never speaking a word, but every now and then suddenly breaking into a hoarse, quiet, cackling laugh, for no reason whatever."

"He is evidently not used to Europeans," says the sister. "I suppose he is greatly amused at our outlandish ways."

Quietly and swiftly the bright hours slip away. The chief event of the day is that, at different points on the line of march, the cavalcade encounters three huge droves of camels, the smallest of which contains sixty at least. They are in the charge of a few Bedouin folk who have brought them across the desert from Bagdad, intending to sell them in Damascus. Many of the camels are quite young, and most of them seem very wild—at least so thinks the trembling Sebaste when they crowd up to her, showing their teeth, and craning forward their ostrich-like necks as though debating whether to peck first herself or her beloved steed.

The plain is crossed in a north-easterly direction, the travellers ascend the slopes of its bounding chain of hills, and, in the afternoon, descend the other side to the plain beyond, where they camp outside the village of Muadameyeh. Gathered round the supper-table in the sitting-tent after dark, the wanderers indulge in wild conjectures about the unknown regions on which they are entering.

"What is the name of our next camping-place, Cæsar?" asks the father, as the young dragoon appears with a dish of dried dates.

"To-morrow, sir," is the answer, "we shall not gamb at no place. We shall be in the wilderness."

Accordingly, in the course of next day's march our travellers find themselves at last in the Syrian desert. It is a perfectly level plain, bounded to north and south by two ranges of bare hills. At first the breadth of the plain from range to range is only a very few miles, but day by day, as the travellers advance eastward, the plain grows broader and broader, an ocean of bluish green. Yes, really green, for (though at a later season the sandy ground is parched and bare) at this time of year it is more or less covered with tufts of outlandish desert weeds with strange aromatic scents, and sometimes the plain is gay with wild flowers. Otherwise there is no vegetation whatever—not so much as the ghost of a tree or shrub over all the level plain, which stretches away and



away to right and left toward the rocky hills, and eastward is unbroken to the utmost horizon. Oh, the delight of a gallop over those level tracts of desert! Ladylike canterings do very well for the confined plains of inhabited countries, but when you have hundreds of miles of desert before you, then is the time to let your horse start off with a bound and rush like the wind over the vanishing plain, away and away toward the changeless horizon. Only Abu Hassan (wretch that he is!) has a notion that horses with eight hours' work before them ought not to gallop much in the broiling sunshine — and Cæsar countenances him!

The morning start from the desert camp is generally an early one. Sometimes breakfast is over, the tents and their furniture have been packed up, and the cavalcade is on the move before six o'clock. This ensures three hours of reasonably cool riding. Wonderful are the tender colors of the shadowy distance, gleaming in the first rays of the sun. All around the desert creatures are stirring: bright-eyed jerboas, furry and soft and brown, dart out of their holes to look at you; terrified lizards with upturned tails scurry hither and thither between your horse's hoofs; huge yellow locusts flit and swim through the clear, fresh air; a lark is singing overhead; even that venomous old snake (the which approach at your peril!) is enjoying his morning exercise of twisting and coiling and gliding about the tufts of desert weed.

On ride the travellers, gaily conversing through the early hours of coolness. But about nine o'clock the heat comes upon them suddenly, irresistibly. The morning breeze drops to a perfect stillness, there is no sound but that of the horses' hoofs on the hot ground, conversation dies away, and the riders go on and on in silence, their heads muffled in their silk kefiyehs, — not oppressed by the heat, but quietly enjoying the glowing atmosphere.

Then do the desert fairies begin their freaks; and, as you ride on over the endless plain, suddenly you see before you a cool, still lake of shining water, dotted with islands, and reflecting its rocky shores and headlands. It is all so perfectly clear and natural that your eyes, dazzled by the hot sunshine, rest with delight on the cool, clear water. But presently, alas! the lake begins to dry up, contracting at every forward step, till all before you is once more desert — unending desert.

"Sophia," says Sebaste confidentially,

as she brings her horse alongside of her sister's, "when we get home, I think I shall publish a pamphlet entitled 'The World, a Mirage,' proving that what we call the Universe — that is, the subjective side of material nature — is as different from the objective reality as is that lake we saw just now from the quivering particles of heated air which caused the delusion!"

"Eh?" says Sophia absently; "did you speak?"

"Sophia!" exclaims Sebaste reproachfully, "have you *no* sympathy for the exalted imaginings of philosophic minds? Philippa, dear, *you* will listen to me?"

"Not if it's about Subjective and Objective, as it always is, Sebaste!" says Philippa severely. "I have told you before that I consider that division to be merely a conventional way of speaking, conveying, to my mind, very little meaning indeed!"

Sebaste subsides.

When midday comes the travellers no longer look about for shade, knowing that that commodity does not grow in the desert, but alight in the midst of the endless plain, holding fast their horses while the Syrian folk are busy pitching the now indispensable luncheon-tent. Then, when the Syrians are at liberty, the travellers creep under its delicious shade, and contentedly watch the preparations for the midday meal. Cæsar delicately carves the fowl in true Arab fashion (be not over-shocked, fastidious reader!) with "the knife and fork that heaven gave him;" and from out the magic saddle-bags of Abu Hassan appear lemons, oranges, dates, dried figs, raisins, and so forth — a sumptuous feast in the midst of the desert.

Luncheon over, while the baggage passes out of sight on its way to the camping-place, there ensues a delicious hour or more of quiescence. Space is limited in the tent, wherefore Irene and the father generally retire to their respective palanquins, where Irene studies the guide-book with indefatigable diligence (though scanty, indeed, is the intelligence to be extracted therefrom concerning these outlandish regions); while the father instructs Hassan, who reclines on the ground on the shady side of his palanquin, in the English cardinal numerals. The father is never weary of extolling the marvellous quickness of his young Arab pupil, who at the beginning of the journey knew not one word of English, but who now, starting at one, goes on almost unprompted all

the way up to a hundred, which, when he has reached, he bounds into the air in irrepressible triumph, exclaiming, "Hassan no Arab! Hassan English!"

The sister is exhausted with the heat, and Sophia hovers about her arranging a couch of rugs for her to rest on; Sebaste, reclining at ease with her head on Elizabeth's lap, observes meditatively, "What a place is the desert for metaphysical research—for pursuing the study of scientific ontology!" and falls asleep on the spot. But Philippa—strong-minded, uncompromising Philippa—is rummaging in her Arab saddle-bags for an ink-bottle, and, sitting upright on her rug, she heroically labors at the family journal. Here is an extract from the productions of her indefatigable pen:—

"We are now really in the desert, and are much surprised to find how beautiful the Syrian desert is—at any rate at this time of year, when the rains have only just ceased. On our first day of desert-travelling we were much impressed by the loneliness of the endless plain, over which we travelled on hour after hour without seeing a single human being except our own people. There was no water to be had all the day, though there are many dry water-courses, which we suppose to have been made by the winter rains. The men were always on the lookout in case some pool might still be left; but all water had been sucked up by the sun long since. The mountains on either side of the plain are beautiful, though not very high; the plain here is from four to five miles wide, and we have been coming through the midst of it, about equally distant from the mountains on either side. The view ahead of us is perhaps the most beautiful, being perfectly flat, and stretching away, as it seems, to such an infinite distance, that even the most prosaic and unimaginative person is roused up, and begins to wonder what there can be, or what there may not be, in that mysterious country, so full of beautiful tints and shadows. About mid-day we pitched our lunch-tent on the greenest spot we saw near us, and very glad were we of its shelter from the broiling sun. We had brought water sufficient for ourselves; but the poor horses and mules had to do without, and stood about rather disconsolately, trying to get into each other's shadow. In the afternoon we espied, at some distance on our left, one or two Bedouin tents, and nearer to us was the flock of black sheep and goats belonging to them. Led by the sheikh, we cantered up to them; and Cæsar, pro-

ducing a little silver bowl of Damascus workmanship, we had a drink all round of sheep's and goat's milk, which was most refreshing. It was comical to see our quiet, dignified Sheikh Nasr running after and capturing a goat with much agility. The poor Bedouin goat-herd was very obliging, and willing to give us travellers as much milk as we liked. The father gave him a Turkish *bischlik*, which is equal to about half a franc. He was overjoyed at this, and said to the sheikh in Arabic that he should go and tell his people how much the 'English governor' had been kind enough to give him."

"Wake up, Sebby!" exclaims Philippa, shutting her ink-bottle; "Abu Hassan says it is time to start."

"My name is Sebaste, and has three syllables, if you please," says that young lady, with dignity. "You know, Philippa, that I object on principle to the hashing up of Christian names in that way! And I wasn't asleep, either."

"Why don't you ever help with the family journal, then?" retorts Philippa.

Meanwhile every one has, as Sophia elegantly expresses it, "woken up," the horses are saddled, the palanquins are hoisted up between the much-enduring mules, the tent is packed up, and onward once more fare the travellers. Followed closely by 'Ali, Sheikh Nasr leads the way, as usual in silence, except that sometimes the wild, plaintive note of a Bedouin chant breaks sweetly on the stillness of the hot air. After perhaps an hour's riding, the Man with the Eyes points forward across the boundless plain. The sheikh, with those eagle eyes of his which well befit his name of Nasr, follows the direction of 'Ali's hand, and sees also what to the rest of the travellers is invisible. But presently, as they ride on, there appears, miles and miles away on the eastern horizon, a tiny white speck scarcely discernible on the wide, wide ocean of green. Then onward and onward fare the travellers, while that white point seems to recede before them till they begin to think that the fairies are at their tricks again. Sometimes (when the white speck is on slightly rising ground) it is full two hours before it is reached, but slowly, slowly it grows and grows, until at last it develops into the tents, the welcome tents.

Such are the days of desert travel. Our wanderers, having started from Damascus on Thursday morning, reach, at the end of Saturday's march, the village of Karyatên, — a strange little town islanded far away in the vast plains of the desert. But the

description thereof shall be left for another chapter.

## XIV.

## KARYATEN AND THE KASR EL HER.

WE left our travellers still advancing over the waveless desert-ocean toward the island-town of Karyatên, where live, surrounded on all sides by the desert, fifteen hundred souls, of whom five hundred are Christians. As the cavalcade reaches the outskirts of the village, there comes forth to meet it the venerable figure of a Christian priest—long-bearded and black-robed, his head surmounted by a tall, black head-dress. His face beams with a kindly smile of welcome, and having greeted the travellers with the usual sign, he silently walks before, showing the way to their tents, which have been pitched on the flat, open space constituting the village threshing-floor.

Next day is Sunday, and, as usual when there is no English service to be attended, the father reads morning prayer and litany in the sitting-tent, the interior of which attains this day a temperature of 96° Fahrenheit. In the course of the morning the priest reappears. Leaving his shoes outside the tent (a pretty instance of Eastern politeness), he enters barefoot and kindly greets each of the travellers. He knows no European language, not even Greek, but a conversation is carried on through Cæsar and the sister, the only members of the party acquainted with both Arabic and English. It seems that he is called Hur Ibrahim, that he is very poor, and that he is a priest of the people known as the "Greek Catholic" Church—not that there is, in fact, anything more Catholic about them than about any other orthodox Churchmen, Greek, English, or otherwise, but that they acknowledge the supremacy of the pope and conform to some distinctively Roman uses. Presently Hur Ibrahim asks permission to depart, and, as the travellers rise to take leave of him, he removes his tall head-dress, and looking upward, whispers a prayer over them and gives them his blessing. Finally he leaves the tent, promising to return in the afternoon and show them the way to the renowned tomb of Mar Elyân. Who this saint was I know not, but it is said that miraculous cures are still constantly wrought at his tomb, especially on mad persons. The sufferer is chained up at night in the little church which contains the tomb, and in the morning is found perfectly well. Hur Ibrahim assures the

travellers that he has himself witnessed many of these miraculous healings, and no one who watches his face can doubt his perfect sincerity.\*

On their return from the tomb he takes the travellers to see his church, and then brings them into his own house. They enter a room furnished with carpets, and cushions laid round by the walls, and are most kindly received by the ladies of the priest's household—*i.e.*, his wife and the wives of his sons, who salute their guests by kissing their hands and pressing them to their own foreheads. The sister, who is experienced in Oriental customs, says that it is "manners" to snatch away one's hand at once without allowing this ceremony to be completed. The guests (including various friends of the priest) then sit round the room on the carpets, and are sprinkled with rose-leaves by way of further welcome, after which coffee is served in Oriental fashion by the priest's eldest son.

In the evening the sheikh of the town (who is a Moslem) sends the ladies of his household to call on the travellers. The father is, of course, excluded; and the Arab ladies, with their dark-faced, white-robed attendant and protector, are received in Irene's tent, where conversation is carried on through the sister, while the visitors contentedly smoke two *nargilehs*, which they pass from one to the other. It is amusing to see the puzzled looks of the good ladies who have never before set eyes on such a number of single woman-kind, and their intense curiosity to discover what in the world has been done with all the husbands. Meanwhile their hostesses are lost in admiration of the sheikh's beautiful little daughter, who is about thirteen years old and has a charming face, full of sweet and refined intelligence. At last, with many pretty speeches, the visitors take their leave.

"What a satisfactory baby that was which one of the ladies brought!" exclaims Philippa, when they are gone. "I wish all infants could be swaddled up to that absolutely stiff condition, so that one could hold them without any fear of their breaking!"

Next morning, at about six o'clock, our friends again set out on their travels, ride through the narrow fringe of standing corn on the outskirts of the village, and

\* At the same time it may be right to add that the Eastern mind (so far as one can judge without a knowledge of the language) seems to be immeasurably less accurate than the Western, so that an Oriental will, without intending to deceive, say many things which are not strictly and literally true.

once more launch forth into the desert. "Did you see those patches of corn?" says the father; "they show that the Syrian desert is really cultivable land wherever there is water. Why should not a canal be cut from the Barada at Damascus and the plain irrigated?"

Philippa, before whose horrified eyes there arises a vision of the desert neatly laid out in market gardens, hastens to demonstrate that there is a range of hills between, and that, further, the whole of their progress through the desert has been a gradual ascent, and the subject is happily dropped. Presently the riders overtake their six camels, on whose twenty-two water-skins they and their horses will be entirely dependent at the next camping-place. As at this time of year there is water at various places between Damascus and Karyatên, it was thought unnecessary to bring them all the way from Damascus, so that this is their first appearance. They are certainly an acquisition from an artistic point of view, and give to the cavalcade a picturesque and distinguished character.

Fully three hours of the day's march remain to be accomplished when the Man with the Eyes points out the Kasr el Hér, an ancient and ruined tower near which the tents are to be pitched. It stands on a slightly rising ground, and is distinctly visible against the sky. The wanderers will long remember this place as the most beautiful of all their desert camping-grounds. Yet there is no water, and indeed nothing at all on the spot save the solitary ruin, the only remaining fragment of what must once have been a building of some grandeur, for there remains a gateway, nearly buried in the sand, whereon is some beautiful carving. No one seems to know what the building originally was—except perhaps those large and outlandish, but sage and meditative birds, who make their nests among the shattered blocks of stone.

To the south the view is bounded by a low chain of mountains, bare and desolate, but beautified by the tender shades of blue and purple which rest on them, always still, yet always changing and melting into one another. "They are as beautiful," exclaims Sebaste, "as the tints on the surface of Plato's ideal world!" But northward the hills have receded, and the desert rolls away in boundless plains of shadowy blue, looking like the sea, but vaster still and more mysteriously beautiful.

After supper the travellers come out to

watch the sunset, a glorious pageant of gold and crimson clouds; and then Sophia and Sebaste wander away and away in the glowing rosy light toward the unattainable horizon. Suddenly, before they are aware, the darkness comes down upon them, the vast dome of the sky is filled with the sparkling stars, and far away a faint, silvery, dawning light shows where the moon will rise, and entices them eastward on and on, and yet a little farther. Fearing to disturb the absolute silence of that venerable solitude, they are talking scarcely above a whisper in that half-metaphoric, wholly inexplicit strain which is little more than thinking in words.

"I wish," exclaims Sebaste suddenly, "that we could fall in with some of the desert fairies, and persuade two of them to go back and take our places in the tents, so that you and I could plunge farther and farther into the desert, and wander away and away, and never be missed! Is it not oppressive sometimes to feel one's self so tightly tethered to one's friends? How is one to become acquainted with Nature if one may never be alone with her? And how are we ever to find the clue of that symbolic interpretation of the material world (not fanciful and metaphoric, but intrinsic and essential) which has been lost and forgotten for ages, but none the less must assuredly somewhere exist? But the *mind* is free—free as the wind to rove through worlds of nameless fancies, through deserts of wild thought —"

"*Snakes!*" suggests Sophia, with sudden and startling emphasis.

"Well, I don't mean that I would go quite alone!" says Sebaste impatiently; "but I don't think it can be right to keep timidly to the beaten paths forever."

So saying, she turns away, and half sings, half murmurs, in the silent air, the vague words of an impromptu song:—

The mind, the soul, the spirit, is free  
Far over the earth's sweet meadows to flee,  
Far over the plains of the billowy sea,  
To wander at will with steps untaught  
Through wilds and deserts of measureless  
thought;

Free, free to soar upward afar out of view,  
And to plunge in yon ocean of fathomless  
blue.

I dare not, I dare not adventure alone,  
But venture I will, when my wings are grown!

"Hush, hush!" whispers Sophia, standing still. "Where are the tents?"

The sisters look round. The vast dome above, the boundless plains around, are faintly visible by the light of the stars, and one struggling, doubtful ray from the

rising moon. But the tents have vanished in the distance long ago.

"I noticed the stars; I know the direction, I am sure!" says Sophia.

"There, there is the ruin!" exclaims Sebaste, pointing westward.

Far away against the darkened sky is indistinctly visible one darker point—the Kasr el Hér.

"Who could have dreamed we had wandered so far?" says Sophia.

"I have noticed before," answers Sebaste, "that Time moves faster in the desert, where there is nothing to interrupt his flight."

So they make all speed to get back to the tents, watching with some compunction, as they draw nearer, the meandering course of a light which, sent out apparently in search of them, is making away northward, in which direction they had themselves set out. On their arrival they find the whole camp in alarm at their absence, and every one talking of the dangers of the desert—wild beasts and so forth. Cæsar has been exceedingly anxious, but fussiness is not one of his characteristics, and seeing that the two have returned, he merely announces the fact in an Arabic shout to the searchers, and then, coming up to Sophia, says quietly, "You see, lady, this is not like your country," proceeding in a few forcible words of his outlandish pretty English to explain the line of conduct usually adopted by a hyena when he meets any one at night.

Weeks afterwards the fact is casually divulged that the Kasr el Hér is a notorious place for the descents on travellers of Bedouin plunderers, that no Syrians would dare to camp there unless protected by the presence of Europeans, and that Cæsar was up all that night with the sheikh keeping guard.

The next morning three of the sisters announce their intention of mounting three of the camels, which are forthwith relieved of their empty water-skins, while Cæsar brings out quilts and rugs for the riders to sit on, making them very comfortable before allowing the creatures to rise to their feet. This latter operation is a somewhat critical one. First the camel, with an indescribable flounder, gets up on his front knees, and you are thrown backward with nothing in the world to hold on to. Suddenly the whole mountain of a creature heaves up behind, throwing you violently forward; and finally he once more heaves himself up in front with a most appalling roll, nicely calculated to pitch you off altogether.

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However, when the beast is once on his feet, the motion (though apt to induce feelings of sea-sickness) is not at all unpleasant, the exalted seat enables one to enjoy an entirely new aspect of things in general, and the position (sitting with your feet crossed on the camel's neck, and looking straight forward) is certainly preferable to the somewhat unnatural position of feminine horse riding.

The sisters are speedily initiated into the mysteries of camel management, and are soon ambitious of exchanging the slow swaying walk for a brisker trot. This desirable end is attained by the amiable zeal of Sheikh Nasr, who rides behind and whips on the camels till they mend their pace considerably. Sebaste's camel is the most docile of the three, and will break into a trot whensoever she touches him up with the end of the guiding-rope. So she careers along in a very independent manner, and only once feels a little disconcerted—viz., when she stops her camel for a moment to wait for the others, whereupon the polite beast, naturally thinking that she wishes to alight, suddenly lies down on the spot. Altogether, the new steeds prove themselves most exemplary, except, indeed, when there appears at some distance to the north a herd of Bedouin camels. This is quite too much for their equanimity, and they suddenly begin to edge away very decidedly toward their compeers, and only by much tugging at the rein on the part of their riders can be induced to return to the right track.

At the end of four hours' riding it is discovered that the cavalcade is being somewhat delayed by having to wait for the camels, which cannot travel so fast as the horses; whereupon the camel-riders think with compassion on the thirsty horses and mules who, forasmuch as the twenty-two skins had leaked, and arrived at the Kasr el Hér half empty, were put on short allowance of water last night, and no allowance at all this morning, and must be eagerly desiring to arrive at the well in prospect; so they signify their desire to return to horseback, and unwillingly allow their beloved camels to kneel down for them to alight.

Two hours more of very hot riding brings them at last to the much-desired well of the White Khan. When they arrive they have to hold their horses fast for fear they should throw themselves down the deep well in their eagerness for the water. Having obtained water for themselves and their dear horses (and the ladies care as little as their steeds for its



strong taste, and even for the lively polliwogs disporting themselves therein), they creep into the delicious shade of their pretty little tent; and while lunch is in progress, the rest of the camp springs up round them as if by magic, and their short day's journey is at an end.

"To-morrow, sir," says Cæsar, "we shall be at Balmyria."

## XV.

## PALMYRA.

BRIGHTLY rises the sun which is to light our travellers to their long-expected goal; and before he has been long above the horizon the cavalcade sets forth on the six hours' march to "Tadmor in the Wilderness."\* Cæsar, exhilarated by the prospect of reaching the journey's end, starts this morning in a frolicsome mood, and greatly amuses the travellers by his earnest endeavors to get a rise out of dear old Abu Elias, riding at him full tilt, wheeling round him, and flourishing over his defenceless head that curved sword which, with its beautifully embossed scabbard, is an heirloom in the Cæsar's family. As for Abu Elias, he is quite content to be made a butt of for the occasion; and while Cæsar prances round him on his beautiful steed, he sits on his jogging old horse benignly smiling.

But soon all eyes are fixed on the eastern horizon, where the broad valley is at last bounded by the converging hills, which run in a low chain across its mouth, leaving a narrow opening through which the travellers will have to go. And now, beside this pass, become faintly visible some of those tall, mysterious towers built by the Palmyrenes in ancient days, before the Roman conquest. In the general abstraction one member of the party surreptitiously vanishes. Irene's little grey donkey (who is so handsome and valuable that he has to wear a conspicuous necklace to divert from his own personality the power of the Evil Eye) seizes the opportunity, when his mistress is safe in her palanquin, and makes off on his own account, and, to the intense mortification of the rest of the party, reaches Palmyra first of all, where he is subsequently found with a sturdy Bedouin on his back, and barely rescued from an obscure and inglorious fate.

It is nearly midday when the pass is reached at last, and there, tired out by the overpowering heat, our friends settle down

for rest and luncheon in the shade of one of those strange tower-tombs of which more than a hundred stand—some in ruins, some almost perfect—on the slopes and at the foot of the hills which bound the plain of Tadmor to the south and south-west. Some of them are eighty feet high, with six stories—square rooms with panelled ceilings ornamented with mouldings, and still retaining traces of color; while tier above tier, from floor to ceiling (hundreds in a single tower), are the narrow *loculi* filled with human bones, and here and there a ghastly skeleton, with fragments of tattered mummy-cloth scattered around. In one corner of the tower is always to be found a winding staircase, often with wide gaps left by fallen stones, making the ascent thereof a delight to the enterprising, and a terror to the weak of nerve. On the outside of the tower, over the fine doorway, is sometimes a projecting slab supporting a large, recumbent figure carved in stone, near which is a tablet with an inscription in Greek and Aramaic.

The wanderers are too eager to rest long, and are soon again on their way through the pass. Suddenly the plain of Tadmor comes into view, and there at last are the world-renowned ruins of ancient Palmyra. Long lines of graceful Corinthian columns, the entablature in many places still perfect, beautiful ruins of classic temples, a chaos of fallen pillars and blocks of stone; and beyond, the vast pile of the Temple of Baal. Strange ruins are these, strangest perhaps in that there is no shadow of that melancholy which, in all inhabited countries, hangs so sadly over the remains of ancient grandeur. Here in the perpetual sunshine, under the cloudless blue of the Syrian sky, and in the peaceful loneliness of the Eastern deserts, all is bright and fresh and silently beautiful. There is nothing timeworn about those graceful ruins of temples, those ethereal groves of columns. They seem like the remains of some fairy city built in a night from the moonlit dews, and vanishing before the first sunbeams into wreaths of morning mist.

The travellers have heard of an Arab village at Tadmor of some fifty mud-huts, but no sign of it is visible. As they approach the far-reaching ruins all is silent, no living thing is stirring. Presently, in the midst of the chaos of fragments, they catch sight of their tents, pitched almost in the shadow of the Grand Colonnade (some of the tent-ropes made fast to fragments of fallen columns), and within view

\* 1 Kings ix. 12; 2 Chron. viii. 4.

of the great Temple of Baal. This is perhaps the most beautiful part of the ruins; at a little distance to the north-west is an exquisite small temple in almost perfect preservation, and a few steps from the tent-doors, in the opposite direction, rises a graceful arch enriched with beautifully elaborated sculpture.

As soon as they are rested our friends set forth to explore the great Temple of Baal, the sun-god. There rises before them a huge wall seventy feet high, enclosing a square court of which the side is seven hundred and forty feet long. Part of the wall, having fallen into ruins, has been rebuilt from the ancient materials; but the whole of the north side, with its beautiful pilasters, remains perfect. As the visitors enter the court they stand still in astonishment at the extraordinary sight which meets their eyes; for here, crowded within those four high walls, is the native village of Tadmor. It was natural enough for the Arabs to build their mud-huts within these ready-made fortifications, but the impression produced by such a village in such a place is indescribably strange. The temple, so to speak, is eaten out at the core, and little but the shell remains. But here and there a fluted Corinthian column or group of columns, with entablature still perfect, rises in stately grace far over the wretched huts, the rich, creamy color of the limestone and the beautiful mouldings of the capitals contrasting with the clear blue of the cloudless sky. The best view of the whole is to be obtained from the roof of the *naos*, which, once beautiful and adorned with sculpture, is now all battered and defaced, and has been metamorphosed into a squalid little mosque. To describe the view from that roof were indeed a hopeless task. High into the clear blue air and the golden sunshine rise the stately columns; crowded and jumbled and heaped together below, untouched by the gladdening sunbeams, unfreshened by the pure, free air, lies all the squalor and wretchedness of an Arab mud-hut village.

Four more delightful days are spent at Palmyra, in wandering about among the graceful ruins, and in growing familiar with what were once the stateliest buildings of that lordly city. After much searching among the widely scattered chaos, they at length discover what is thought to be the doorway of an ancient Jewish synagogue, and there on the lintel and doorpost, according to that ancient command, are inscribed in Hebrew some words from the Law. The sister and So-

phia are appealed to for an interpretation thereof, but two words are all that they can decipher.

The ruins of Palmyra swarm with ancient inscriptions, both in Palmyrene (*i.e.*, Aramaic) and in Greek uncials. The Greek inscriptions are the terror of Sophia and Sebaste, who are expected by the rest to decipher them for the general benefit. It is a pathetic sight to see the miserable Sebaste held in position, by moral coercion, before one of them, and given to understand by her inexorable elders that there is no escape for her till she has read it.

The only water to be obtained at Palmyra smells and tastes strongly of sulphur, but one gets used to little details of this kind; and one of the most delectable things in the place is a copious subterranean spring of clear water which is really warm, but which, when the thermometer announces over 90° Fahr. in the shade, seems by contrast deliciously cool. The entrance to the cave has been anciently closed with a roughly built dome, only a narrow space being left as an entrance. The first time the travellers visit this cave, they arrive almost simultaneously with a little procession of Arabesses from the village. A little girl dances in front with very graceful movements, and next comes a tall negress who beats a tambourine with great vigor, and from time to time utters the quavering shriek which, among Arab folk, is an expression of joy. She is the nurse of the two girls who follow, escorted by several others. These two are native brides, and the object of the procession is to bring them on this their wedding day to bathe at the spring. The English ladies beg to be admitted to see this ceremony, and the favor is granted, but not before they have, by request, removed their hats and kefiyehs, that the Arabesses may behold their long hair, and be thereby assured of their femininity.

It is indeed a delightful place for bathing. At a little distance from the entrance the bottom suddenly shelves down, and you find yourself quite out of your depth, and can strike out into the deepening twilight, and swim on and on into the darkness till nothing remains of the glaring sunshine without but a doubtful gleam of daylight far away; and still you may swim on and on, and still the deep stream lengthens out into the gloom and seems to have no end, even as doth this present paper. Ah, good reader, would that thy

patience were inexhaustible! Then would I further tell of break-neck descents into subterranean tombs, and the discovery therein of many ancient sculptures on huge slabs of stone, and many ancient skeletons crumbling into dust at the slightest touch; of the ascent to the mediæval castle which (built, saith tradition, by a Druse prince and refugee) stands on the summit of the highest and boldest of the neighboring hills; of the going down into the deep moat thereof; of the final clambering progress up the face of the rock from which the castle towers aloft, and of the marvellous view from the topmost turret. But, alas! even that memorable gallop over the desert to the eastward salt lakes must go uncelebrated and undescribed.

The last evening at Tadmor in the wilderness sinks down into night. The brilliant moonlight illumines the ruins of the ancient city as once its stately and populous youth, and rests calm and peaceful over the long line of the Grand Colonnade, more ethereally beautiful now, maybe, than when fresh and new in Hadrian's days. They are haunted, those forest-like columns, graceful arches, and scattered heaps of fragments; the semblance of a royal lady glides among them with sad but stately step. Weeping over her city's downfall, so like her own, sharing its desolate sorrow as once its pride and glory, flits here and there the mournful ghost of Zenobia, the queen of the East. It is her story which gives so pathetic an interest to these ancient ruins, far away in the lonely eastern deserts, and that haunting shadow which makes it so hard to say, as say we must — Farewell to Palmyra.

## XVI.

## RETURN FROM PALMYRA.

DURING the stay of our friends at Tadmor, many are the suggestive remarks made by the younger members of the party relative to the attractions of Bagdad and the Euphrates, which latter is only four days' journey from their present abode. Unfortunately the elders, being swayed by certain prosaic considerations of no interest to any one, do not respond to these wistful hints; and so it comes to pass that on Monday, May 12th, our wanderers set forth on the return journey to Baalbek. They rise at about four o'clock, and when the sun is up, reluctantly turn their faces westward, feeling convinced that they will never see Palmyra again. It is sad to turn back and retrace one's

steps; it is hard to discover that the path one has been eagerly pursuing is, after all, only a by-way leading off the main road! Wherefore our friends do not start on the day's march in their usual gleeful mood, but ride soberly and silently through the desert plain. Even Hassan has so far forgotten himself as to behave for once like a reasonable being.

On this morning the travellers are accompanied by a charming little sheep (or large lamb) purchased from an Arab at Tadmor. It trots along after them in the most confiding manner, though quite at liberty to bolt into the desert and attempt an escape. In the evening there is a sharp shower of rain (an extraordinary occurrence in these regions), whereupon this small sheep walks into Irene's tent and there reposes on the carpet till the shower is over. Later on it even trots into the sitting-tent during supper; but the father, mindful of certain future repasts, sternly forbids his daughters to make a pet of it. So "Irene's little lamb" is led off by the ear to the tent of that villainous old Abu Elias, the cook, and is seen no more; or, as Sebaste more accurately expresses it, he appears not again *quid* sheep.

The most exciting event of this first day's march is the discovery of three large greenish-grey eggs left on the ground at some little distance from one another, and with not the slightest pretence of a nest anywhere near. Cæsar pronounces them to be the eggs of a vulture, and great is the elation of the travellers at the discovery of such a treasure; which elation is much increased when forth from one of the eggs there begins to make itself heard a plaintive chirp, and in its shell is descried a small hole, which is gradually enlarged by a small beak pecking thereat from the inside. Very tenderly does the father carry these treasures to the tents at the White Khan, and there bestow them in a biscuit-tin filled with cotton-wool. Next morning at breakfast the supposed vultureling is found to be subdued and silent, whereupon great anxiety prevails as to his health, and an appeal is made to the sister, who, being a trained nurse, is able to doctor anything, from a camel to an Arab baby. She forthwith gives the patient a warm bath in her teacup, and her efforts are regarded by a grateful little speech (all on one note, and that a squeaky one) through the window of his abode. Moreover, a second egg now begins to show signs of vital activity. It, too, has a voice of its own, and on its surface also a chink can presently be discerned. This

state of things continues till the midday halt, when, after much controversy as to whether the eldest chick should not be given a start in life and helped out, the sister carefully peels off the shell and releases what proves to be a hopeful young bustard. But, alas! he proves also to be in an unfinished condition, and the following night he dies, as does also his unhatched brother! This is the second tragedy of the return journey.

On the Wednesday evening our friends find themselves once more at Karyatên, where Hur Ibrahim kindly welcomes them. The ladies seize this opportunity of returning the call of the sheikh's family, and seeing their friends at home. The sheikh's house is a very extensive one, and the visitors are entertained in a large room furnished with divans, carpets, etc. Mrs. Sheikh herself carries round the rose-sherbet, followed by the pretty daughter before mentioned, who holds a large napkin of very delicate material, on which the visitors are expected to dry their lips. The sister carries on an Arabic conversation with the sheikh, and many polite things are said, which unfortunately are rather lost on the rest of the English visitors.

For the next three days, diverging from the scarcely perceptible track which leads towards Damascus, our friends travel over ground never (says Cæsar) traversed by Europeans, and through places quite unrecognized by guide-books. Even the Cæsar has never been here before, and Sheikh Nasr only once. The last days of desert-travel have now arrived. The Palmyrene excursion has been eminently successful, the only disappointment being that the travellers have not fallen in with any large number of Bedouin folk. Once, indeed, they find themselves not very far from a Bedouin camp, which they might visit by making a detour of two hours or thereabout. Unfortunately this would involve the loss of a day; for whenever the Bedouin see visitors approaching, they instantly kill a sheep, and by no possibility can you bring your call to an end until you have feasted thereupon, which rule of good manners necessitates a certain expenditure of time. Wherefore, to the insupportable disappointment of some of the party, the Bedouin project is given up.

An account of the desert-marches would be incomplete without some description of the devices to which our friends resort in order to enliven the monotony of the long rides. When feeling particularly puerile they propound impromptu riddles, which

aim at being as idiotic as possible, and eminently succæd.

At other times the sister charmingly recites ballads for the benefit of the other riders; but perhaps the most acceptable entertainment is that supplied by Cæsar and Sheikh Nasr, when they get up a tournament for the amusement of their English friends, charging one another at full gallop, chasing one another like the wind, wheeling about with astonishing swiftness, and generally displaying very fine horsemanship, — sometimes, moreover, making quite intelligible speeches in the language of gesticulation.

"Cæsar would make his fortune on the stage!" exclaims Philippa. "Look at him now, bearing down upon Sheikh Nasr with eyes flashing wrath, and his sword held like a spear above his head!"

Cæsar dashes to the side of the sheikh, and glaring into his face, makes the following speech without uttering a word.

"Thou and I, O sheikh, are deadly foes. When I meet thee alone, I will seize thee by the throat. I will wring thy neck with my hands, and leave thee dead on the ground!"

As for Sheikh Nasr, he can tell quite a long story in sign-language. Some years ago he made a journey to Odessa to visit by invitation a certain Russian prince, and very interesting is his account of his experiences on shipboard.

"Why, it is the very words of the Psalm!" exclaims Philippa; and in fact the sheikh, though perfectly silent, is clearly speaking on this wise:—

"We mounted up to heaven," says he; "we went down again to the depths. The ship reeled to and fro, and staggered like a drunken man; and as for me——" Here he lays his head down on his horse's neck, and looks as though his soul were indeed melting because of trouble.

Sometimes the sister converses with Sheikh Nasr in Arabic, and in the course of these conversations it is discovered that he is the nephew of that Sheikh Miguel who was married to an English lady of rank. It is also discovered that, for all his gentleness, he thinks very little of making a descent on a hostile camp, taking with him five or six hundred horsemen, and making a clean sweep of all their possessions; and you would believe him, too, if you were to see his fine face lighting up with the "joy of battle," and his dark eyes sparkling and flashing as he remembers these exploits. But he cannot be persuaded to describe them in detail. It is strange, after such an admission, to

see the kindness and courtesy wherewith, when the cavalcade arrives at the camping-ground, he advances to the father's palanquin, takes him in his arms, and lifts him to the ground, carrying him with the utmost gentleness, and apparently with no effort at all. Then, with stately grace, he will move toward whichever of the ladies is still on horseback, and, silently laying one hand on her rein, will point with the other to his own shoulder, meaning that she is to lean thereon as she dismounts.

The travellers now find themselves once more in a region of villages, which are interesting in their way, though most of our friends look back with regret to the time when they sometimes travelled all day without seeing a human being except their own people, and camped at night under an unbroken expanse of sky, surrounded on all sides by the vast tracts of the lonely desert. It is exceedingly amusing to arrive at a village where Europeans are an altogether unknown curiosity. Nearly the whole population come forth to witness the arrival, and follow the outlandish creatures to their tent doors, where they stand in mute astonishment watching with wide-open, serious eyes the progress of afternoon tea. By this line of conduct they give to the strangers the best possible opportunity of gazing at *them*, and the English folk are never weary of admiring their graceful attitudes, picturesque dresses, and (sometimes) very beautiful faces. Children almost always predominate, and very charming children they are, especially the little girls, some of whom are wonderfully handsome. If you leave your tent door open you are sure to have a whole ring of these little Arabesses gathered round it, and watching your movements with the profoundest admiration. Their mothers and grown-up sisters also take a very deep interest in the English ladies and their strange attire, and are never tired of stroking their silk kefiyehs, marvelling at the astonishingly fair hair of some of them, and pitying their sunburnt faces. They are always most anxious to know what relations they are to one another, and it becomes imperatively necessary to learn sufficient Arabic wherewith to explain, with the help of signs, that they are four sisters with their father, and a friend. When asked after their mother, they point to the ground, and are answered by sad faces of intelligent sympathy.

The journey from Palmyra to Baalbek has now been more or less described; but

the present paper having been submitted to the searching criticism of the practical-minded Philippa, she pronounces that "there is no backbone in it." By way of supplying this lamentable defect, we will now conclude with one of her own eminently vertebrate descriptions, extracted from the pages of the family journal:—

"On Ascension day (May 15th), leaving Karyatën, we rode across the desert westwards, and in about two hours began to ascend the lower slopes of the mountains bounding it in that direction. A picturesque little couple on a donkey, a mother and her son (a boy of about thirteen), came with us from Karyatën as far as the first village we reached, in order that they might have the benefit of our protection on the road. Besides themselves, the unfortunate little donkey seemed to be carrying a stock of things for sale, and some household goods into the bargain. El Breij, where we camped that night, looked very picturesque as we approached it, lying as it does near the eastern slope of the Anti-Lebanon. The village seems miserable enough when one gets near, but the people who crowded to see us seemed healthy, and most of them very good-looking. El Breij is on the way from Damascus to Homs, and a carriage road is actually in process of being made between the two cities.

"The next day we had a beautiful ride through mountainous country. Our route lay along a *wady* which traverses this part of Anti-Lebanon; further on it develops into a splendid gorge, whose rocky, mountainous sides are very grand. About seven hours' ride brought us to Ras Baalbek, a village on the western slopes of the Anti-Lebanon, from whence one looks across the valley to the snowy ridges of Lebanon.

"Next morning we started for Baalbek, and rode all day along the valley, which takes a south-westerly direction. The mountain ranges on either side are very beautiful; there is a good deal of snow even on the lower ridges of the Lebanon, and it has not yet disappeared from the Anti-Lebanon range. We had beautiful views of the Mount Sunin (over eighty-five hundred feet high), and far away in the distance we at last saw Mount Hermon again. A good part of our path lay by the side of a stream which comes from one of the sources of the Orontes, and flows in a northerly direction till, joined by other streams, it forms that river. In this stream we saw a snake of a tawny-brown color swimming at full speed, till, perceiv



ing us, he went to the bottom and lay there, refusing to stir for any amount of stones thrown at him. A handsome tortoise was picked up this morning, and Irene has decided to appropriate him; so we have another travelling companion, whose constitution, it is hoped, will prove tougher than that of the infant bustard.

"At last, as we came round the shoulder of a hill, we had a beautiful view of our destination, the ruins of Baalbek."

But they must be relegated to the next chapter.

# XVII.

## BAALBEK AND THE LEBANON.

NOT more than one clear day can be devoted to Baalbek. Our friends visit first the enormous hewn stone (shaped, but not entirely detached) left in the quarry by the ancient Phœnician builders, and intended, apparently, for the unfinished north wall of the platform on which stands the great Temple of Baal. It is 68 feet long, 14 feet 2 inches high, and 13 feet 11 inches broad, containing over thirteen thousand cubic feet.

As for the ruins of the great temples, although far less extensive than those of Palmyra, they are immeasurably grander, and are the most beautiful ruins ever beheld by our travellers, though not fascinatingly weird and strange, like the more ancient Egyptian temples. The visitors first explore the vaults in some of the massive substructures, which contain Phœnician masonry of unknown antiquity, dating from a period far more remote than that of the classic temples above, built in the days of Antoninus Pius. Emerging from these vaults, they turn to the Temple of the Sun, with its stately colonnade of Corinthian columns sixty-five feet high supporting a sculptured roof of wonderful richness. Then, passing through the beautiful entrance in the eastern face, they stand in bewildered admiration of the profusion of interior sculptures, fragments of which are beautifully preserved.

Next they make their way to the great Temple of Baal, and marvel most of all at the remaining six columns of its immense colonnade. Each column has a circumference of twenty-two feet, and their height (including base and Corinthian capital) is seventy-five feet. They are furthermore crowned by an entablature fourteen feet high, which, with its deep moulding and profusion of sculptured ornament, is said to be hardly surpassed in the world. The capitals and bases are each but a single

block of stone, the mighty shafts are each composed of three blocks, and the entablature, reaching from column to column, of one block. There were originally fifty-four such columns.

To any one standing at the lower level of the Temple of the Sun, it is indescribably impressive to look upward at the stately giants that remain, conspicuous against the clear blue sky, the rich tints of the stone made more resplendent by the golden Syrian sunshine.

After long wandering about the great Temple of Baal, ever discovering fresh fragments of deep mouldings and exquisite sculpture, the travellers walk round on the outside of the exterior walls of the platform on which the temple stands, till they reach the western side. Here the wall rises about fifty feet above the surface of the ground, and contains the three huge stones of world-wide renown. They are each from sixty-three to sixty-four feet long, and in height and thickness thirteen feet. They are raised to a height of twenty feet above the ground. Immediately beneath them is a course of masonry wherein each stone is about thirty feet long and thirteen feet high. The whole of this platform is of unknown antiquity, built probably by the ancient Phœnicians.

Thence they go to visit the beautiful little Temple of Venus, which stands at some distance from the others, but is of the same age and style. Very beautiful it looks, with its rich mouldings lit up by the evening sunshine, and contrasting with the vivid green of the surrounding trees.

Thus ends our travellers' one view of some of the most marvellous ruins in the world. To see them thoroughly in so short a time is a manifest impossibility, but even so superficial an examination leaves a profound impression not to be easily obliterated.

A very sad thing has to be done in the course of this day — viz., saying good-bye to Sheikh Nasr, who is departing for Beyrout. He comes into the sitting-tent, and silently taking the hand of each one of the travellers, kisses his or her right shoulder, and so departs. This leave-taking throws somewhat of a shadow over the day, which should have been an especially merry one, seeing that it is Cæsar's birthday. Returning from the ruins a little before sunset, the travellers find him entertaining quite a crowd of congratulating friends and cousins, who sit round in a ring in front of the sitting-tent, with Cæsar in the middle.

"This lady speaks Greek, Miss Se-

baste," says he, and the ill-fated Sebaste finds herself confronted without escape by a very charming lady in an Oriental silk mantle, who looks at her expectantly.

"Ελληνιστὶ λέγεις?" falters Sebaste, sure that she is talking neither modern Greek nor ancient.

"Μάλιστα," exclaims the lady, in a sprightly manner; whereupon Sebaste, greatly encouraged, plunges into an elaborate sentence of her best Attic, at the end of which it appears that the Greek lady has understood never a word, so that the humiliated Atticist is fain to beat a retreat to her tent, and stay there.

The travellers are very curious, it being Cæsar's birthday, to find out the age of that anomalous compound of boyish enterprise and mature experience; so the father casually remarks during supper, "I suppose, Cæsar, you are about fifty to-day?" Whereupon Cæsar laughs, and says he is twenty, sir; and to no more than twenty can he be brought to confess. The English are amused to discover the juvenility of their travelled dragoman, who has been everywhere, and knows everything, and whom they treat with so much deference. In the evening there is a grand illumination of the camp, and fireworks withal (of Damascus production), not unworthy of the festal occasion.

The next day our friends ride across the Buka'a valley, the beautiful plain which separates Anti-Lebanon from the Lebanon chain. Not far from Baalbek they make a little detour to inspect a monumental column standing alone in the plain. The inscription thereupon being no longer legible, its date and significance seem to have been forgotten.

At last they leave the plain and ascend the rocky slopes at the foot of Lebanon as far as the village of Ainêta, where they camp. From the tent doors they have one of the loveliest views on which their eyes have hitherto feasted themselves. Above them rise the gigantic slopes of Lebanon, culminating in sheets of dazzling snow, while far away across the plain the range of Anti-Lebanon draws up to the snowy peaks of Hermon, emerging from a flood of soft blue shadow.

The following day is devoted to an expedition to the cedars of Lebanon — some old trees still preserved as a specimen of the ancient glories of the cedar forest in the days of David and Solomon. To-day the Syrian steeds excel themselves in the mountaineering line, bravely mounting up the steep, zigzag path, climbing over opposing rocks, and so forth, till the tents,

lying far below, appear like five tiny specks of white, and the travellers can look away over the broad green plains eastward to the towering heights of Anti-Lebanon (which, as our friends rise higher and higher, rear themselves upward to an astonishing altitude), and southward to the snow-fields of Hermon shining in the morning sunlight. Soon the air grows keener, and at length they come to the snow, of which they have to cross several broad patches, much to the astonishment of their steeds, who nibble at it to begin with, but finding it unsatisfactory, plod along in a resigned and disconsolate fashion; whereas the Arabs are wild with the delight of a snowball match, passing up handfuls of snow to the riders, that they, too, may play with the marvellous stuff.

Then they suddenly arrive at the topmost ridge of the pass of the Jebel-el-Arz,\* seventy-seven hundred feet above the sea-level; and there before them, with the grand mountain-gorge of the Kadisha leading down towards it, lies the Mediterranean, stretching away westward in boundless plains of soft, bright blue, or rather, as it seems,† rising up in a mighty towering cliff; while far out to sea, half-way up the face of that radiant wall of blue, float whole trains and processions of fleecy white clouds shining in the dazzling sunlight.

They descend on the other side by a path steeper if possible than that which they mounted, and in due time they behold on the vast sweep of the mountain-side a single patch of green — the cedars at last! While still at a distance you can hear the notes of the birds which make their nests there, and "sing among the branches;" and when you enter the broad-spreading shade (though not more than about four hundred cedars remain), you find yourself in a genuine fragment of ancient forest, the grand old trees as stately now, the cone-covered ground beneath them as deeply shaded, and the sweet air around as redolent of the fragrant cedar wood as when all the mountain-side was covered by their kith and kin.

In the midst of the cedars there is a little Maronite church, used for service only once a year (on the Feast of the Trans-

\* That is, "The Cedar Mountain."

† The horizon being apparently on a level with the eye, the mind (unable to grasp the idea of so vast an expanse) refuses to believe that it is in reality a flat surface. This curious delusion is no doubt familiar to all who have looked over the sea from a great height, but is none the less impressive when experienced for the first time.

figuration), and left in a dreadful state of neglect. Not far from this our friends take luncheon, and then they wander about among the old superannuated giants of the forest — "the cedars of Lebanon which Thou hast planted."

After a time the mountain mists gathering on the heights overhead give warning that they must start on their return. So they once more mount their steeds, journey if they desire not to be beclouded, and, again ascending the pass, pick their steep way down the other side. In crossing one of the snowdrifts near the summit, Abu Hassan, who is on foot, creates great amusement by suddenly toppling over on the incline of hardened snow, making an extraordinary picture as, in his baggy Eastern costume, he rolls over and over down the steep descent. He quite appreciates the joke himself, and rather enjoys it than otherwise.

The next day they once more set forth on their travels, and for some distance retrace the way by which they came from Baalbek the day before yesterday, descending the rocky slopes till they reach the broad plain of the Buka'a, across which may be seen the dark green patch of vegetation where stand the ruins of Baalbek, embowered in clustering trees. They then diverge from the Baalbek track, turning to the right and skirting the foot of the Lebanon. During the morning they are much delighted by a lovely mirage to the southward, quite as beautiful as any they saw in the desert. A broad lake, dotted with numbers of rocky islets, filled up the end of the broad valley, its clear waters shining in the sunlight; but not long have they admired it when it slowly dries up before their eyes, and finally vanishes. About midday a further diversion is caused by the sight of a large number of storks wading about in the standing corn, which covers the rich soil of the plain, and is already more or less in ear.

Shortly before arriving at the camping-ground, they pass, near one of the innumerable villages with unpronounceable names, the Tomb of the Prophet Joseph, where, say the Moslems, the patriarch Joseph lies buried — a story quite as unfounded as all other Mohammedan traditions of the kind.

The tents are pitched at Neby Reshedi, a Moslem village, near which is another village entirely Christian. Ramadan being just over, to-day is a Mohammedan festival, wherefore all the folk of Neby Reshedi are out holiday-making, and come crowding round the strangers, staring to

their heart's content. Not far from the tents a party of men in their dignified Eastern robes are solemnly going through a kind of dance in a ring, which appears very comic to Western eyes.

The following day is spent in travelling along that same plain at the foot of those same mountains. Baalbek, opposite which they seemed to stay (so broad is the expanse of plain) during the greater part of yesterday's march, is now finally left behind, and they are journeying onward towards the snowy peaks of Hermon, which rise up far to the southward, and recede and recede as though they would lure them on forever. A melancholy event takes place to-day, for they enter upon what is undeniably neither more nor less than a good, smooth, hard carriage-road.

"Good-bye to the mountains and the valleys!" said Cæsar, and all the travellers join in a chorus of lamentation, heaping all the opprobrious epithets they can think of on carriage-roads in general and this one in particular together with telegraph wires, stone houses, and all other marks of civilization whatsoever. Alas! the end of their pilgrimage is fast approaching now.

#### XVIII.

#### CONCLUSION.

#### FROM ZAHLEH TO BEYROUT.

WE left our travellers in the Buka'a valley, not far from the town of Zahleh. Their sad thoughts about the approaching end of their journey are a little distracted by the glories of the lovely scenery through which they are passing. At the end of the day they leave the plain, and enter a deep mountain-glen, which, when they have ascended for some distance, they finally arrive at Zahleh, the largest (and assuredly the most beautiful) village in the Lebanon. The town was captured in 1860 by the Druses, and there was a terrible massacre of the Christians. Its population now is ten thousand, almost all of whom are Christians. The houses are clustered in terraces up the side of the glen; and a very charming picture they make, rising steeply on each side of the stream which flows below, bordered by tall trees, while the rocky sides of the glen tower above in protecting grandeur.

The tents are pitched on a high knoll of grassy downland overlooking the town, a situation very like that which they occupied at Shechem; and the view from the tiful. The people crowd round the visitant doors is wonderfully grand and beau-

ors, all in bright holiday attire — the womankind wearing light-colored cotton dresses, and the pretty white muslin veils which, when wound about the head and thrown over the shoulder, are so charmingly becoming. Some of the children can talk a little English.

"Where did you learn English?" asks Sebaste of a small boy.

"In the school,"\* says he.

"Why are you not in school now?"

"It is a holy-day. The Lord went to heaven."

"That means," says Sophia, "that this is the Feast of Ascension in the Greek Church — the octave of our own."

The next morning our friends regain the valley, and for several hours journey on as aforesaid at the foot of the Lebanon chain, which towers above them on their right; while on their left stretches the broad, smooth, green plain, bounded by the purple heights of Anti-Lebanon, which trend away towards the south till they rise up before them in the shining peaks of Hermon. It is a view not soon to be forgotten, and the colors thereof are marvellous, — first the soft, rich green of the plain, then the purple mountain-slopes, transfigured by a dazzling haze of all tender hues, and above all, the cloudless blue of the Syrian sky.

Toward midday they begin to mount the rocky slopes of Lebanon to their right; the plain sinks rapidly beneath them, the distant Hermon alone remaining almost unchanged; and so they rise higher and higher till they gain the summit of the Lebanon Pass, five thousand and sixty feet above the sea-level, whence they obtain wonderful glimpses of the broad, bright, blue sea, and, alas! of unwelcome, unwished-for, uncalled-for, wholly superfluous Beyrout at last.

Shortly after leaving the plain the travellers are called upon to behold and admire the Tomb of Noah, wherein, say the Moslems, Noah lies buried. The tomb is about one hundred and twenty feet long, by two or at most three feet broad. Poor Noah seems to have been very thin for his height!

Not long after this some of the riders begin to look wistfully at a certain ruin lying at some distance to the left of the road. Cæsar happens to be behind — so, telling the others whither they are going, they make bold to leave the road and pick their way along the rocky paths, meaning, after this little detour, to rejoin the rest

farther on. What that wicked ruin has got into its head I know not; but certain it is that it plays at hide-and-seek round the rocky hillsides, gets farther away instead of nearer, and finally vanishes altogether, so that the riders begin to grow bewildered, and also to feel some twinges of compunction at having brought their horses over such rocky ground on what seems likely to prove but a wild-goose chase after all. Just at this moment, tearing over the break-neck rocks, up gallops the Cæsar, and with eyes flashing wrath, though with his usual gentle politeness, asks whither they are going, tells them that the ruin is two hours distant (a statement not to be taken too literally), and placing himself at their head, leads them back to the road like so many sheep. They find it rather difficult to answer all the sympathetic inquiries of the others as to the interior wonders of that unconscionable ruin.

Farther on Cæsar points out a building used for storing the Lebanon snow, which, says he, is bought up from year to year for £200 or £300 and taken to Beyrout, where it is sold and used for cooling sherbet, etc. They also see at some distance a group of buildings devoted to the manufacture of silk. The slopes of Lebanon are to a great extent covered with young mulberry-trees hereabout, grown for the support of silkworms.

Luncheon is eaten high up in the mountains, near the Khan Sofar, and the tents are pitched lower down in a vineyard (some of the tent-cords being fastened to the vine-stems), whence there is a wonderful view of Beyrout lying far below, and beyond, the high wall of the brightly gleaming sea.

A thick cloud hides the western sun, but just leaves the horizon clear, so that, as the invisible sun sinks lower and lower, our friends can see his bright reflection lying across the steep waters toward them, like a pillar of dazzling light. Just as the pale ball of the rayless sun appears in the fringe of the cloud, the inexorable Abu Said suddenly ejaculates, in a sepulchral voice, "Dinner ready!" and though they allow the "soop of the evening" to grow nearly cold, they behold not the actual sun-setting. This is the last supper in camp, and a somewhat melancholy repast, — though the father tries to make it more cheerful by beautifully decorating the table with ferns gathered near the tents, and some lovely garden roses which suddenly make their appearance, having been brought in by some of the Arabs,

\* The British-Syrian Mission has a school at Zahleh.

whence I know not — elfland, perhaps. When the travellers again emerge into the open air the night has come, the soft sunset glow lingers faintly along the horizon over the sea, the stars hang sparkling in the now perfectly clear sky; only one fleecy cloud steals along in feathery folds just below the brow of the height whereon stands their house and home — their last, last camp!

"To-morrow, sir," says Cæsar, "we will put the two flags from the tops of the tents on to the palanquins."

"No, no, Cæsar — that's childish. People would take us for Americans!"

"Indeed, sir," protests the Cæsar, much hurt in his feelings, "that is always done when parties arrive in Beyrout, and not only by the Americans!"

So the point is conceded, and next morning our friends start at about seven o'clock with flying colors, one palanquin adorned with the red ensign, the other with the union-jack, and both of them further decorated with beautiful bunches of roses. The Cæsar has earned his triumphal procession, for it is no small feat to have completed so successfully such a long journey (the longest he has ever made in tents), — this being, furthermore, the first expedition through the country which he has organized independently, and on his own account. So he rides into Beyrout in triumph, as before stated, "Leading us like captives at his chariot-wheels!" exclaims Sebaste; but Philippa says, "We are the victorious troops."

Before starting this morning it is a pathetic sight to watch Abdul (who, having several times travelled to Mecca, is an important personage, and ought to have been described long ago) tenderly decorating, with a graceful nosegay of crimson roses, the huge head of El Adham, Philippa's great black steed. El Adham (whose name signifieth "the Black One") belongs to Abdul, and is his chief (if not his only) piece of property; and his master's affectionate pride in him is unbounded, so that when the other Syrians wish to tease poor Abdul they are accustomed to announce that El Adham is lost, stolen, or strayed. Unfortunately, that strong-minded steed does not seem to return his master's affection; and indeed, soon after the start from Jerusalem, he one day jumped clean over poor Abdul, who was meekly offering some water, and hurt him considerably. On the present occasion it is touching to see the devoted Abdul tenderly arranging the roses, while El Adham, with his hard old face, does his

best to look indifferently, and not at all flattered.

It takes about four hours to ride from the camping-ground to the journey's end — a pretty steep descent nearly all the way, during which our friends gaze with delight at many wonderful views of those mighty western slopes of Lebanon, where the vast sweep of the rocky mountain-sides is variegated with rich, harmonious tints — as of lichens gold and brown on ancient ruins — contrasting strangely with the vivid green of the young mulberry plantations; while sprinkled all around are innumerable tiny villages, perched aloft on rugged heights, or nestled here and there in rocky nooks and corners.

"Can one not see," exclaims Philippa, "by the flourishing and populous look of all those villages, that the Lebanon is under a Christian governor? He is almost independent, you know, for though Turkey appoints him to begin with, his authority is guaranteed by the Christian powers of Europe, and he cannot be dismissed without their consent."

"Ah," sighs Sebaste admiringly, "what a splendid thing it is to have one's guide-book all by heart!"

As they ride through the outskirts of Beyrout, Cæsar suddenly catches sight of a figure some distance ahead emerging from a house on the road. Off goes Cæsar at full gallop, and when the other riders come up with him, he is bending down to kiss Sheikh Nasr! The sheikh has discarded his desert-dress, and is now attired as befits his high position. Over a beautiful silk robe of rich orange and gold he wears a long mantle of fine white alpaca, while a silk kefiyeh of white and purple hangs gracefully over his shoulders, bound round his head with the Bedouin coil of camel-hair, which, with his huge boots of scarlet leather, is alone retained of his desert costume. He greets the travellers most kindly, his fine face beaming with welcome, though, as usual, he speaks not. Then, mounting his horse, he rides with them through the town, a distinguished addition to the cavalcade. Finally, our friends arrive at the Oriental Hotel, and there establish themselves.

In the evening they have to perform the melancholy duty of saying good-bye to all their good Syrian folk, whom the father has asked Cæsar to bring to the hotel for that purpose. Standing a little above them on the stone stairs, the father makes them a speech of hearty thanks for all their attention and good behavior during the journey. This is translated bit by bit



into Arabic by Cæsar, and received with looks of gratitude and affection.

Then forth stands Abu Hassan, and, as spokesman on the other side, makes an elaborate Arabic speech, with many gestures of respect and politeness. His thanks and compliments are in their turn duly translated by Cæsar, and then the father distributes the long-expected *bak-sheesh*, while the ladies shake hands all round and say farewell in their best Arabic. And so they go their ways.

That night none of the travellers can sleep, so oppressive do they find it to have a roof over their heads, and to be hemmed in by solid walls after their seven weeks of camping in the open.

The days which follow seem unaccountably flat, though enlivened by one long gallop to the Dog River (Nahr el Kelb), where they contemplate the ancient inscriptions left on the rocks by Assyrians, Egyptians, and Romans, and are especially impressed by the dignified mien of certain Assyrian potentates with long, curly beards, carved in bas-relief on the natural rock, and now in various stages of defacement.

At last the day of departure arrives, and our friends embark on the Austrian Lloyd's steamer, on the deck of which we must finally take leave of them. The screw begins its revolutions, and Beyrout slowly recedes, looking very pretty in the rich glow of the nearly setting sun. It is late in the season, and there are but few passengers. The sea is smooth and the sky cloudless, so that there is good hope of a prosperous voyage. The sun is really sinking now in a glory of rosy light. Already the dark blue sea and the white houses of the distant town lie in the shadow, which is creeping up the steep slopes of the mountains. Only their summits, rising clear above a long line of soft, fleecy cloud, glow red and beautiful against the cloudless Eastern sky. *Vale!*

AUGUSTA KLEIN.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

#### AN OVER-ADMINISTERED NATION.

THE population of Germany consists of two classes: the people who makes rules and regulations and the people who have to obey them. The first class comprises a number of officials respectfully, if vaguely, alluded to as *Die Verwaltung* (the administration), and includes a great many persons from the sovereign down to the

policeman; the second class embraces the rest of the population of Germany — some fifty-three millions.

Englishmen travel fast, and travel mostly for pleasure; so that they hardly notice what becomes rather important if one stays long in any part of the country, the extent to which the administration regulates the private life of the citizen. To take a simple instance, every one has observed the difficulty of getting the particular carriage and seat in a railway train that one may happen to want. Most of us are content to set this down as one of the little peculiarities of German officials which must be humored or smoothed over. But at the bottom of this curious practice (as at the bottom of everything German) lies a theory. That theory is the direct opposite of what an Englishman would expect, and includes three propositions. (1) It is the guard's duty to open the door of the carriage. (2) He must only open it to a passenger travelling to one of the stations at which the carriage will stop. (3) Such a passenger must be provided with the proper ticket. These involve three corresponding duties on the passenger's part. (1) He must purchase the proper ticket. (2) He must wait on the platform till the guard assigns him a seat. (3) He must take that seat and stay there till he is let out. Thus railway travelling is not such a simple matter as an Englishman is accustomed to think it. These rules are less rigidly insisted on if you are travelling by first-class; for that implies wealth, and you may be a person with whom it is as well, even for that great person, the guard, to be on good terms. If you are travelling by any other class and you show in the slightest particular a disposition to flout the regulations you will feel the heavy hand of the administration at once.

The hand of the administration is heavy in Germany because it is guided by a strong head. This is best understood by a particular instance. The kingdom of Saxony, to take an example, is divided into four *Kreishauptmannschaften*, and the head of each of these is appointed by the king. He corresponds directly with the minister of the interior (who is also appointed by the king), and is assisted by an elected council (*Kreisausschuss*), whose advice he is not obliged to take. He stands in a similar position to a lord-lieutenant with real administrative authority. Under him are various *Amtshauptmannschaften*, with a hierarchy of small officials under them, and as each *Amtshauptmann* hopes to be a *Kreishauptmann* some day,

and each *Kreishauptmann* may aspire to be a minister, it is clear that the chances of a factious opposition arising in any *Kreishauptmannschaft* are exceedingly small. If any one shows a turbulent spirit he knows that the minister and the king are making a note of it, and that his behavior will count against him if he should ever desire anything from the administration. Be it said at once that in this particular case it happens that the king is a man of great ability in many directions, a man who would have made his mark in any rank, and also a man of inexhaustible courtesy, kindheartedness, and tact; an able and sagacious ruler in every respect.

Be it also said that the fondness of the German citizen for being looked after is such that what makes an Englishman most merry, seems to the German not only natural but agreeable. It is not, in fact, that the Germans put up with their administration; they enjoy it.

It may be worth while then to note, in no unfriendly spirit, how much interference with the subject this powerful administration thinks necessary in one or two directions. Everybody's railway experience is the same; but a step further on and most travellers note nothing more because it is not forced on their attention. Take a public garden. On the back of one seat may be read, "*Nicht drauftreten*" (Do not stand on the seat). On the back of the next, "*Nur für Erwachsene*" (Only for grown-up people). The use of the latter notice is twofold: it gives a self-important citizen a chance of turning out half-a-dozen children and taking the seat for himself, which is gratifying; and secondly it opens a fine field for administrative functionaries to consider whether a given occupant is grown-up or not. A little further on we find, "*Hunde sind an kurzer Leine zu führen*" (Dogs to be led in a short leash); *kurzer* being in spaced capitals. The enormity of having a dog in a long leash is not so clear as the discomfort to oneself in leading him. This last notice is a very good example of a class of notices forbidding things that one would not think of doing if they were not suggested.

A little further on comes "*Kein Einlass für Kinderwagen*" (No perambulators allowed here), which is good; and yet a little further, "*Spielplatz*" (Playground), which is thoughtful of the administration, and here you will see not much except perambulators, nurses, and children. On a pump you will often see, "*Kein Trink-*

*wasser nur, Nützwater*" (This water is for general purposes, not for drinking).

To sum up, you may sit on this bench but not on that; you may stand on this and not on the other; you may draw this water but you may not drink it; you may take your children here but not there, and you may take your dogs nowhere except in a short leash. Might not all this paint have been saved, even to the notice about the dogs, seeing that besides being led in a leash they have to be muzzled and registered in the police station?

One notice you do not see in a German public park, and that is, *Keep off the grass*. The reason for this is the same as led the fathers to provide no punishment for parricide; it does not enter into the heads of the administration that any one would be guilty of such an enormity. The parallel outrage in England would be if a man were to take an axe into Hyde Park and begin cutting down the trees. The one event which can move a German citizen to interfere, even by speech, with a province of the administration is to see an Englishman walking on the grass.

In a piece of forest land laid out in walks near a health resort I saw a number of boards suggesting various transgressions to my virgin mind, and among them the following very fierce notice: "*WARNUNG* [in very large capitals]. *Das Rauchen aus offenen Tabakspfeifen oder von Cigarren sowie der Gebrauch hell brennender Anzündemittel am oder im Walde ausserhalb der öffentlichen Fahrwege ist bei Zwei Mark-Pf. Strafe, verboten.*" It was a very hot day, and this was the last notice that I came to. So I read it through twice, and, as the sense did not come quickly, I copied it down and retired to the shade to take off my hat and think it over. I think it means that you may smoke a pipe with a cover to it anywhere in the woods, but that you may only smoke open pipes and cigars, or strike matches, on the public paths. The reason is obvious and laudable; it is to prevent the forest from being burnt down; but I was reminded of the notice that I saw in one of the comic papers some time since, alleged to have been discovered at the top of the Matterhorn: "Notice! This hill is dangerous to cyclists."

Outside the wood was a moderate slope down which the road wound to the river; the slope was perhaps as steep as St. James's Street. At the top was a notice, "*Radfahrer: Bergab absteigen*" (Cyclists! get off going downhill). How do German cyclists manage to stomach that?

But the most carefully administered of all German subjects is the traveller by tramway. The following are some only, perhaps one half, of the notices affecting the traffic in one single tram-car. (1) "Keep your ticket till the end of the journey to prevent its re-issue, and show it to the inspector when he requires it." (2) "Get out to the right." (3) "All chattering with passengers is strictly forbidden to the officials." (4) "Any one who gets out or in while the car is in motion does so at his own risk." (5) "Out of consideration for your fellow-passengers, please do not spit in the carriages." Even the administration dare not put that in any other form than a request.

Let no man suppose that these minute regulations are to be disregarded; let him be equally slow to conclude that they are as ridiculous as they appear. They suit the people, and are in some respects an improvement on English ways. To mention one: the really admirable plan of making every cabman driving to the opera exact his fare before he starts. But they are undeniably inquisitorial; and a nation ought to be able to manage some of the simplest actions of life without so much help from its appointed officers. To take one or two miscellaneous examples: you cannot hire a cab at a railway-station without taking a ticket from the cab-inspector, and then you must hire the cab whose number corresponds with your ticket. You may not take tickets at the opera except on the second day before, or else on the morning of the performance. You may not water plants on the window-sill lest they should fall over. You may not put milk in a beer-bottle lest you should poison yourself. This last regulation is very stringent indeed. I wanted some milk in a hurry the other day for a picnic, and the milkman said that unfortunately he had no bottles. Of the many dozen empty ones in the shop he flatly declined to fill a single one, alleging that they were not meant for milk. He pointed to the administration's stamp on the stopper, which consecrated the bottle to beer forever, and assured me that it could not be made worth his while to offend that silent witness. I marvelled, and went empty away. I have a profound admiration for Germany and all her works; but I hope it is no offence to the great empire to say that in some of her dealings with her citizens she often reminds me of the immortal sketch in *Punch*, whereof the legend runs, "Go and see what baby is doing, and tell him not to."

The business controlled by the administration may be generally described as everything in the country except the army. The army and the administration practically divide the attention of the country; and the genuine importance of the administration arising from the duties they have to perform is enhanced by the relative absence of other careers for talent. The navy and the Colonial Office are (if one may venture to say so) as yet comparatively in their infancy, while the bar and the Church do not take the same position in Germany as they do in England. On the other hand medicine takes a position slightly better; but on the whole there remain only two really fine careers, the army and the administration.

The effect of all this on the German nature — quite sufficiently prepared, in any case, to take itself seriously — may be imagined. No doubt the administration is good, but the notion of his own importance which is entertained by every one connected with it is exaggerated. You feel this very strongly if you have had anything to do with English offices. An Englishman, with rare exceptions, is a gentleman first and an official afterwards. He construes the rules which govern your application as favorably to you as possible, and gladly stretches a point if he can. If he is obliged to refuse you he shows you how his hands are tied, and perhaps suggests some other way by which you may attain part, at any rate, of your object. He does not carry himself as if he were administering you, and as if you ought to be grateful to him for the attention. Far different is your reception if your business lies a little off the lines of ordinary routine in Germany. Hardly have you framed your request when the answer comes back like the crack of a whip, "*Nein! das geht nicht*" (No! that cannot be done). You mumble excuses, which are acknowledged with a grand bow and a, "*Bitte sehr! Adieu!*" (Don't mention it; good-morning) — courteous but unencouraging. In fact the grand difference resides herein; the English administration, knowing itself to be human, does not pretend to perfection, and thinks it quite natural that a point might be raised now and again which it has not foreseen. On the other hand, the German administration rather resents a suggestion that everything is not being done for you that you can reasonably want; and I think that is a sign that a country is over-administered.

The proper province of the administration is a subject one might dispute on for-

ever. But it certainly does not include some injunctions that we have noticed. It is not necessary to put at a bridge-head, "Notice! keep to the right, and do not loiter on the pathways," because bodies of men always find it more comfortable to go one way and come back the other. As for loitering, it is impossible if there are many people crossing, and if there are not it does not matter. It is not necessary that the State should put you into a railway-carriage; the State is sufficiently protected if it makes sure that you have taken your ticket. The carriage you travel in is a detail which concerns your comfort, and that you must necessarily understand better than the State. It is not necessary that the State should forbid a man to cycle downhill; it might as well forbid him to go out in the rain without an umbrella. Such regulations do nothing except swell the importance of the administration.

If an Englishman comments unfavorably on the administration he generally says, "Something ought to be done," and then does nothing. That is a sign, I think, that, on the whole, our administration is weak; although when we have made up our minds that a particular official must be strong, there is no limit to the extent we trust him. The policemen at Regent Circus, for example, are invested with, and daily exercise to the admiration of the world, a despotic and uncontrolled authority over the liberty of the subject which is not approached by any Continental official.

If a German comments unfavorably on the administration he says with an irritated shrug, "Of course if you want anything you must do what you are told, but a sensible man cannot even understand half their nonsense." That, I think, is a sign that a country is being over-administered. Of the two states it is difficult to say which in the abstract is better; but an Englishman in Germany is by no means prepared to admit that his native country's state is the less gracious. G. C.

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From The National Review.  
SOCIETY IN CORSICA.\*

THE history of Corsica, and its steady social retrogression since it has become a department of France, is an interesting study for the upholder of a republican

\* For many of the statistics in this paper, the writer is indebted to M. Paul Bourde.

form of government. It is just a hundred years since Paoli, the liberator of his countrymen from their Genoese oppressors, was welcomed in Paris as the Washington of Europe, and was invited by the National Assembly to take supreme command of the new department of France. A people who have for four centuries spent their whole energies in desultory rebellion against the tyranny of alien masters are as little fitted for the privileges of self-government as were the liberated slaves of the Southern States, or the native population of India. Restlessness, love of intrigue, and unhealthy excitement have entered into their blood. The taint is as hereditary as insanity, and it requires a more powerful remedy than mere time. If the natural outlet is denied to it, it will vent itself in social disorder, in political intrigue, or in private enmity. In Corsica there is a stronger element of disorder than the mere restlessness born of centuries of rebellion and bloodshed. For the political corruption, and for the crimes of the vendetta, which combine to make the state of Corsica a disgrace to France, the spirit of clanship is really responsible. The clan disappeared from the Highlands of Scotland before the civilization of the seventeenth century, with which it was incompatible. In Corsica it flourished side by side with the advanced and elaborate institutions of republican government, with all of which it is in the bitterest antagonism. The spirit of the clan infects every department of the State. The elections are corrupted by it; the hands of the executive are tied by it; private quarrels are spread and embittered by it. It invades the law courts, and utterly destroys the confidence of the people in the impartiality of their magistrates. The unit in Corsica is not the individual. It is the clan. The leader or patron of the clan is generally a person of considerable wealth and influence, both of which must be at the service of the meanest of his supporters in whatsoever cause he may require it. In return, the vote, the services, and even the life, of the clansman are at the disposition of his chief. The spirit which in a former age responded to the call to arms is now perverted to secret political intrigue, to the support of the family representative at the elections, even to the darker services of the family vendetta. The aggregation of families into organized clans may be observed among most mountainous countries, where the difficulties of communication have prevented any central organization

powerful enough to impose laws. Men driven to their own resources for security unite themselves into families or collections of families for mutual defence. Under good government the clan becomes no longer necessary; but the abominable occupation of Corsica by the Genoese, which lasted four centuries, was no government at all. The country was plundered, and justice was sold to the highest bidder. Men without the support of a powerful family, and without any legal protection, felt themselves lost if they remained isolated. They formed alliances with more influential families, and were willing enough to perform whatsoever services were required of them in return for the guaranteed safety of their families. A Corsican will boast of the number of his relations as an Englishman might boast of the strength of his arm. The duties of the patron of the clan are not confined to the exercise of political influence in behalf of his constituents. A certain patron of an important clan in the north of Corsica, whose lands are scattered among a dozen distant communes, has turned large tracts of arable land into pasture for the free use of his tenants, who, moreover, have the privilege of cutting whatsoever wood they require from his plantations. His generosity is not thrown away. It has gained him perhaps an additional three hundred votes. The supporters who in another age would have followed him to war now follow him to the poll. A client may be in want of thirty francs, but may be unable to sell the wine he made last vintage. He instantly turns to his patron. The wine is loaded on a mule, and a journey of thirty miles has to be made to sell the wine to the patron who does not want it. A Corsican not belonging to a clan—if there existed such an anomaly—and unable to rely upon the support of his patron in the critical moments in his life would, in the present political condition of Corsica, be in a more pitiable state than he would have been, excommunicated seven hundred years ago.

One must have lived in Corsica to realize the importance of success at the elections. At first sight the chiefs of clans would seem to have little compensation for their various services to their clients; but in reality they enjoy to the fullest extent that passion which ruled the lives of such men as Richelieu and Napoleon. To lead men, to uphold their interests against their enemies, to triumph over fallen opponents—these are the functions of the chief of a powerful clan.

The first three months of each year in Corsica are periodically taken up with the elections of the mayors and *juges de paix*, both of which offices are held by Corsicans. The roll of electors is made up by a commission presided over by the mayor; and the appeals against their decision are heard by the *juge de paix*, who in reality makes out the lists. Now, in most of the communes the electors are divided between two clans, who live in the same street, and pass each other a dozen times a day without greeting. The victory of the one or of the other is often decided by two or three votes, and it is therefore of immense importance to be able to enroll half-a-dozen friends, or strike out the same number of enemies. Upon this power depends the possession of the *mairie*. It is easy enough for the *juge de paix* to add to the number of his supporters. Certain electors belong to two communes, either by the ties of marriage or by being landlords in both. According to the necessities of party, they vote for the one or for the other. If they belong to the clan opposite to that of the *juge de paix*, he finds that they belong exclusively to another commune, and have no right to vote in his. If they are his friends, they are sent for; and if they cannot come, their vote is recorded without them. He can further add to the roll of his friends by inscribing the names of electors who have left the commune ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago, and have long been enrolled in the commune to which they have removed. At St. Florent, a commune with two hundred electors, the majority is generally determined by four or five votes. In 1884 the *juge de paix* inscribed the names of six road-overseers belonging to neighboring communes, on the pretext that, as their chief, the inspector of roads and bridges, lived at St. Florent, that commune was their legal place of abode. The Cour de Cassation reversed this decision by an order dated May 24. In the mean time the six overseers had voted at the elections of May 4. Next year the *juge de paix*, totally disregarding the order of the court, again inscribed their names; a fresh injunction was issued; and the party, judging that this source of electors was exhausted, were driven to seek others. There are, besides, a dozen methods of preventing adversaries from voting. The simplest is to refuse them on the ground of insufficient description. There is not much variety in the surnames in Corsica, and children are usually given two Christian names. By inadvertence one of the



Christian names is often omitted from the roll of electors. "You call yourself Bartoli Pietri," the mayor says politely. "There are three Bartoli Pietri in this commune. The list does not say whether you are Bartoli-François, or Bartoli-Pierre, or Bartoli-Ours. You are not enrolled, my friend, and I cannot let you vote." The mayor is perfectly aware who the rejected voter is, and that he is an enemy of the clan.\*

The juge de paix is not unusually himself the chief of a powerful clan. He does not find the two positions incompatible; but his duties to the clan come first. He carries on his official work after the Corsican principle: "For friends, everything; for enemies, nothing." He is placed in so false and embarrassing a position that it would be a miracle if he administered the laws with impartiality. His position as clan chief must, sooner or later, clash with the duties of his office. Suppose he were to sentence a client and an enemy to the same punishment. The client would regard it as a cruel injustice, and it would be so regarded by every Corsican who felt the conscience of the clan. "Very well, sir," the client would say, "you do not recognize me. It is not much good being of your party. I will consult my comrades about the election of a juster patron."

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance to a Corsican of belonging to the clan that carries the elections. The mayor has no sooner been established in the mairie than he throws open the communal lands to his supporters, who are free to enclose it, or to cultivate it, or to have the exclusive right of grazing on it. At Olmetto the communal lands, once considerable, have now almost disappeared. When the commune has some sale to make, such as of timber, the mayor arranges that the tender of some friend should be accepted, and when the day arrives for settlement the purchaser files an application for insolvency. The certificate is sent to Ajaccio signed by the mayor, countersigned by the municipal receiver—in fact, it is perfectly in order; but the commune touches none of the money. The commune exacts a small poll tax on the heads of cattle grazed on their domains. Accordingly, the mayor's friends have ten cattle reckoned as one, and his enemies count ten for every one of theirs. In 1866 at Casamaccioli the mayor had thirty-four partisans and thirty-seven

enemies. The former were assessed at 87.55f., at the latter at 1,002.80f. The result of all this is that the communes which once held enormous domains are now without resource. There are forests large enough to require the services of forest guards; but the communes cannot even afford the modest salaries of those agents. We laugh at the officials of the Sublime Porte who have to wait eighteen months for their salaries. In Corsica—a department of France—there are forest guards whose salaries are six years in arrears. This poverty of the communes has paralyzed the efforts of the State. Magnificent roads cover Corsica from end to end, and railways are being constructed at enormous expense. What is the use of all this? Apart from the main road between Ajaccio and Bastia, you will not meet ten wagons in a day's journey. The people, able to afford mules only, continue to use mule transport on these splendid roads as their forefathers did upon their old irregular mule-tracks.

The spirit of clanship so permeates the whole of society that Corsica is really divided by it into friends and enemies. From the moment that a mayor assumes his scarf he is occupied only in serving his friends or in frustrating his enemies. He regards the government of France in much the same light in which his ancestors regarded that of Genoa. To deceive it by false documents, either to avail himself of its favors or to escape the requirements of its service, is reckoned a fair transaction. If you are his enemy, ask no certificate from the mayor. Were you a hundred times in want of help, he will regard you as a rich man. If you are his friend, he will commit almost any irregularity to serve you. A friend is in temporary want of help. He has a daughter thirty-five years old. The mayor grants a certificate establishing the woman a new-born infant, and the public-assistance fund grants an allowance.\* A friend wishes to escape completely from military service. The mayor furnishes him with a certificate establishing that he is the eldest son of a widow. The gendarmerie who paid a visit to this eldest son of a widow found him living with his father, who was in rude health, and discovered a brother a good deal older than this "eldest son." In fact, it is the general rule that the rich people draw the State poor rates, for it is the rich people who have influence and belong to the powerful clan.

\* Protest of Electors of Palneca, 1884.

\* Commune of Ajaccio.

Endless roguery is resorted to to escape from military service. A friend sometimes requests the mayor not to register the birth of a son. Years afterwards, a day or two before the conscription, the military authorities receive an anonymous letter denouncing the young man who has thus escaped his legal obligations, and he is promptly entered in the registers with the date of his birth, and the words "omitted *par oubli*." Favors without end to friends, annoyances without end to enemies, must bring their natural consequence—an exasperation difficult for an Englishman to imagine. Picture a little mountain village divided between two hostile parties whose every passion is stirred by a fierce electioneering contest for three months in the year. The day comes, and one party triumphs—probably by an injustice of which it is proud. Day after day the vanquished must meet their conquerors in the village street, and writhe under truculent triumph. The men are so plunged in the interests of their petty politics that they seldom do any work. Their electioneering quarrels are often embittered by hereditary family hatreds. There is no wonder then that Corsica surpasses all civilized European countries in the number of its crimes of violence.

The reader will ask why, if the corruption of the petty officials is so glaring, the sufferers do not appeal to the executive for redress. The answer is that they do, but generally without much hope that their petition will be answered. To touch a mayor or a juge de paix is to strike at the existence of an entire clan; a step which the local executive, following the example of their predecessors, are loth to take. Injunctions are obtained in the superior court, the decision of a juge de paix is reversed; but before the ponderous machinery of law can be set in motion the influence of the powerful clan has rendered its action abortive. I will speak by and by of the independent attitude of the gendarmerie; they have no power over the mayor, be his actions ever so audaciously illegal. One of the recent mayors of Sarterre, a town of five or six thousand inhabitants, learned that the gendarmes had laid an information against one of his friends for not stamping a document. The mayor informed the gendarmes that he had dispensed with the necessity for stamps, and ordered them to withdraw their information. The préfet of Corsica was obliged to interfere in this strange conflict.

Perhaps the gravest evil in Corsica is

that there is no confidence in the tribunals. The lower courts are administered by the juges de paix. They are members of a clan; the higher courts depend on juries with clan influence also. Indeed, if the magistrates' impartiality were irreproachable, it would not be believed in. The members of his clan who were acquitted would regard it as an act of personal friendship; an enemy, if condemned, howsoever guilty, would attribute his conviction to malice. Unhappily, the magistrates are in so false a position that they are not impartial, and it is sufficient for an accused person to know the clan sympathies of the jury by whom he is to be tried to be certain beforehand whether he will be acquitted or condemned. In civil actions the plaintiff is pretty sure to have secured powerful influence before he ventures to plead his case before the court. In criminal cases the sentences are out of all proportion to the nature of the offence. When long sentences are passed, it does not follow that the convict will complete his punishment if he be of a good clan. A man sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude for violence received an almost immediate reversal of his sentence. A man who may be seen every day in the streets of Ajaccio led the deadly attack on the journalist St. Elene. His friends will tell you that St. Elene died of his wounds; his enemies, that his death resulted from natural causes. Howsoever that may be, the man in question was sentenced to three months in gaol; but all the world knows that he never underwent his punishment, and that he holds the position in the city police that he held before.

Are the Corsicans to be altogether blamed for their hardened incredulity on the subject of legal justice? Since the days when law was first found necessary to protect society, law badly administered has produced one invariable result. The offspring of legal anarchy is crime, and the criminality in Corsica shows to what a frightful depth the tribunals of the island have sunk. Corsicans, trained by four centuries of armed resistance to their Genoese oppressors, accustomed by the traditions of their race to rely on themselves to avenge injuries, and fearing little from an administration that has already proved itself incompetent to enforce order, naturally take the law into their own hands. An insult is offered, or a political dispute arises; what is easier than the discharge of a gun or a stab with a dagger? The *maquis* is near, and there one is safe. No one who did not know the disorder in

which the country is plunged could understand the enormous proportion of crimes against the person and the alarming increase of banditism. The fact is that nine out of every ten crimes are the result of personal quarrels and family feuds. Scarcely one is from motives of robbery. Where one half of the population oppresses the other half, the continual injustice and petty illegality will goad the oppressed into a state bordering on insanity. A dog killed in a vineyard was the reason given for the vendetta between the Rocchini and the Tafani, which made eleven victims. The part the dog played in the matter is easily understood; the hatred between the two families was sufficient, apart from the dog.

In the political sleep of the Second Empire feuds burned low. The government indicated whom it wished elected, and competition naturally died out. Such a despotism was good for Corsica. Electoral quarrels were impossible; and, as one party could no longer triumph over another, there was less hatred, less injustice, and fewer crimes of violence. The annual return of murder cases tried at Bastia fell from 113 to 35. Since 1871 it has risen again to 72; and the reports of the gendarmerie for 1886 give the appalling number of 135—one for every two thousand inhabitants, or four times more than the number in the department of the Seine. Out of the 135, 52 followed immediately upon election disputes; 56 were the result of vendetta. Is it from a wish not to sweep away all traces of ancient customs that the enlightened French government will not take the one step that would stamp out these abuses? In the days when men had to depend on their own arms for justice, vengeance that slept not seemed far nobler than humility or resignation. To ourselves Corsican vengeance is at one time ludicrous, at another horrible, always an anachronism; but it is only because we live under laws which are administered that we regard it so. Any strong-handed government can force its tribunals to be respected; but France seems to treat Corsica only as a museum of obsolete customs. The result is that Corsicans to-day feel for a murderer pity and admiration akin to that which our grandfathers displayed towards him who had killed his man in duel. It is the man "in trouble" who has a claim upon his friends. If he turns bandit, they feed him and protect him against the gendarmerie. If he is arrested, every means will be exhausted to secure his acquittal.

Thus, witnesses to a murder are very difficult to get; evidence against the accused will render the witness an enemy to the clan. At an election at Palneca, in 1881, a murder was attempted in the village square, in the presence of sixty people. Not a witness could be got. Every one of them affirmed that he had seen nothing of it. Even the wounded man himself, when he had recovered from a bullet in the neck, stated that he could not imagine who had fired upon him. He had had enough, and wanted no second bullet. The prosecution was abandoned.

When a jury is composed of friends and enemies of the accused, the results are extraordinary. Some feign stupidity and deafness. They did not hear the witness make such and such a statement, or they understood him to say the opposite. The result of all this intimidation is that the Corsicans themselves, who have strained every nerve to paralyze the arm of the law, are the first to find that arm too weak to protect them. The very family that has exerted itself to protect a murderer finds that the murdered are not adequately avenged, and, when the court rises, the work of the juries is finished with a gunshot. Chiarelli is sentenced to ten months in prison for blinding Foata with a pistol shot. "It is not enough for an eye," Foata says; and when Chiarelli returns from prison, he kills him.\*

In 1887, in the public square at Sartene, the body of a man lay murdered. His wife appeared, dragging her frightened children after her. She put their fingers in his wounds; she smeared their faces with their father's blood, and, with terrible imprecations, made them swear to avenge him.

The cross is a threat of death, and he who finds it drawn upon his door knows that he must look for no quarter. In decrees forbidding the carrying of arms in certain districts, exception is officially made in the case of persons notoriously *en état d'inimitié*. The vendetta neither sleeps nor knows where it may stop. It is not confined to two persons. The quarrels of individuals are taken up by whole families. Not even collateral branches are exempt, and women must take their chances with the men. Indeed, revenge is more artistically complete when the blow falls upon the beautiful and gifted. In 1856 one Joseph Antoine injured a girl named Sanfranchi. Thirty

\* Sentenced to five years' penal servitude, December 8, 1884.

years passed, and the story was forgotten; but on the 14th of August, 1886, the nephew of Sanfranchi encountered Antoine on, perhaps, the first occasion he had ventured far from his house. He shot the man down like a dog.

Threatened persons remain shut up for months, or even years, in their houses, built, as all Corsican houses are, like a fortress.\* If they wish to go out for a moment to breathe the fresh air on the threshold, a scout goes before and reconnoitres. In the district of Sartene bands of armed men are sometimes met with in the road. It is a man *en inimitié* travelling from one village to another. I have already mentioned the vendetta between the Rocchini and the Tafani, which resulted in the death of eleven persons and the execution of one of the principal criminals. In this extraordinary case two entire families took to the maquis, and waged a guerilla war upon each other; each in turn was assisted by the gendarmerie, who had made disgraceful alliance with bandits in order to effect their arrests. Contrary to custom, some of these bandits became brigands. As a rule persons outside their quarrel are never molested by them. They are merely outlaws. The Rocchini who was guillotined in 1888 (the first execution for many years) boasted that he was only twenty-two, and had killed seven persons with his own hand. Confident of a reprieve, he continued to regard himself as a hero, until the day of his execution. When all hope was gone he sank into the most abject state of cowardice, which lasted until the end.

The vendetta may sometimes be closed by a formal treaty between the parties. An election dispute at San Gavino di Garbini, on the 13th of January, 1878, resulted in the murder of a Pietri by a Nicoli. In the vendetta that followed three Nicoli and one Pietri fell in succession. Both families had taken to the maquis. The préfet and one of the deputies of Corsica interfered; and at a great meeting, a formal treaty, binding the parties to bury the past, was drawn up and signed. Like treaties between States, it lasted only as long as neither party wished to break it. The Nicoli counted three victims, and the Pietri only two. The former re-opened the vendetta to murder an-

other Pietri. The Nicoli broke through a second treaty, and killed a fourth. The third treaty has been observed hitherto. This case has gone three times before the Assize Court; but each time the jury has acquitted the accused on the ground that a written treaty wipes out the past.

There are between five and six hundred bandits in Corsica to-day. Some of them, it is true, are men who have preferred wandering for years among the mountains to undergoing a few days' imprisonment; but the majority are guilty of darker crimes. If a man is accused of theft he will first take to the maquis, and thence as a bandit intimidate witnesses and intrigue among the jury, until he thinks it safe to give himself up. Without these manoeuvres, he would not trust himself to the justice of the court. Unless they greatly excel them in numbers, the gendarmes never attempt the arrest of bandits; for a bandit is a desperate man, and, since death sentences are never passed, the murder of a gendarme or two will not place him in a worse position.

The tax of supporting a bandit is not without its compensations. Bandits are a hidden power in the country. They control the petty elections; they menace those who are hostile to their own friends. Thus, while the existence of six hundred of them is a real danger to public security, it is no small advantage to a Corsican to be related to a bandit. You support, pay, protect, the bandit; and in return he places his gun at your disposal. It is an exchange of services. "He has a bandit in his service" is a common expression. Are you in debt? The bandit will gain you time. Are you disputing the ownership of property? The bandit will show your opponent he is wrong. Have you land on which shepherds trespass? He will keep them off. In a word, the bandit is the Judge Lynch of Corsica, and is invoked instead of the courts.

There is not space within which to sketch in detail the life of the celebrated Bellacoscia family, who ruled the mountains for forty years. Two brothers, on some trifling quarrel with a mayor, murdered him, and took to the maquis in 1848. They established themselves in an almost impregnable valley near Bocagnano called Penticca. Thence they controlled the elections, terrorized over their enemies, and defied the gendarmes for forty years. For their various crimes they were each condemned to death four times, and, doubtless, would have received other sentences had not the authorities seen the

\* Four thick stone walls, pierced by two or three windows in the upper story, constitute the usual model. The ground floor is occupied by the stables; and the first floor is reached by an external ladder, overlooked by a loophole, from which a cannon-ball or a heavy stone can be dropped on the head of an unwelcome visitor.

humor of sentencing to death men who had defeated the gendarmes in every expedition against them. They amassed property, married their daughters well, and procured situations for their sons-in-law with paternal solicitude. As age grew on them they desired to re-enter society. In 1869 they petitioned the Empress Eugénie in person; but their record of crime was too great. They have since, like Vidocq, offered to turn detectives against the other bandits. Their fall came two years ago. The railroad from Ajaccio to Bastia was surveyed to pass close to Penticia, crown land which they had the audacity to call their own. They attacked the workmen, and a French regiment to disperse them was despatched immediately. Their houses and property were seized, and it is said that they escaped to the Continent; but it is whispered among Corsicans that they are still in hiding among the mountains and biding their time for vengeance.

Now let us see what Corsica costs the French. In 1886 the finances showed a deficit of 12,921,253 francs. While the rest of France were taxed seventy-five francs a head, the Corsicans were paying twenty. Frenchmen made up the difference.

Roads and railroads are being made at enormous cost for the use of half-barbarous people, in a country where six hundred bandits are allowed to be at large. The work is carried on by Italians, for the Corsicans are too lazy to work. The railway from Ajaccio to Bastia cost £3,000,000, of which Corsica paid not one penny. Every acre of land valued by a Corsican jury was sold to the government at seven or eight times its value. The opposition and the dishonesty were so great that it was determined that if the Corsican jury's award exceeded the government estimate Corsica should pay the difference, and, since the jury contained a majority of Corsicans, the préfet submitted numbers to them instead of the names of the owners. Moreover, the projected lines from Fiumorbo to Bonifacio, and from Ajaccio to Propriano, were abandoned.

There will be no hope for Corsica until clanship is abolished. Not long ago the préfet was authorized to disburse a secret-service fund. In Ajaccio alone three thousand francs were paid for information about a bandit to a family who had a vendetta against him. In this way the Second Empire spent two hundred thousand

francs in one year. In proposing remedies one might naturally suggest that Continentals should be appointed to the various offices and to the juries; but that would be a mistake. The former measure would alienate the Corsicans; and, in the latter case, Continental juries, unable to understand the involved evidence of native witnesses, would invariably acquit. Appointments of eighteen hundred francs a year could not attract Continentals to live in uncivilized villages.\*

Perhaps an influx of colonists from the Continent might weaken the clan spirit. Corsica could support three times its present population; but how can we expect that colonists should settle in a country where property is so insecure? Travellers are safe enough in Corsica. They have no property. Colonists could not remain a week in the country. How could they expect that their vested rights should be respected when, owing to the quasi-communal system, encouraged by the clan spirit, even the land titles of the natives are in continual dispute? The true remedy is to apply the law. The gendarmes, like Sisyphus, ever wearily push up the rock of Corsican custom, and the law courts ever let it fall back on their tired shoulders.

Pensioned police might be employed as magistrates. As it is, clanship supports local officials in wrongdoing. If the préfet accuses one of these, the deputies make charges against the préfet. They are themselves clansmen. Since the tribunals are often under the influence of one clan, let clanship be broken down. Let the préfet have the independence to dismiss a magistrate guilty of illegalities; let no mayor who abuses his office go unpunished; and, above all, let the punishment for murder be death. If Corsicans once have confidence in the justice of their courts, banditism will pass away, and a great national disgrace to France will be wiped out.

Corsica is an island of great natural resources. Its neglected forests of timber, its acres of untilled vineyard, and its miles of unplanted olive land, might make it one of the richest departments of France. Even the money that has been spent upon it entitles it to greater attention.

BASIL THOMSON.

\* It is remarkable that Corsica, proportionately, furnishes the greatest number of *employés* in the Continental administration of France.



From Temple Bar.  
ROSEMARY FOR REMEMBRANCE.

## CHAPTER III.

THAT night there was a secret rising of the countrymen to do violence to old Bossé. We were his only near neighbors, as the village was half a mile off; but it appeared that we were to offer him no protection, for Ernest was in Desbarrat's confidence, and, headstrong, impulsive boy that he was, had gone so far as to promise his aid. The menservants were of course in sympathy with the mob. Ernest had kept his secret only too well, but Annabel discovered it at the last moment, just as he was leaving the house. It was too late then to procure his father's interference, for Mr. Thorold slept in the wing of the house furthest from the road, and to awake him would be to confess the danger to Mrs. Thorold. I thought this would be the least danger of the two, but Annabel thought otherwise; she believed that to know of such a riot would be very injurious to her aunt.

My room was in the front of the house, and the first I knew of the disturbance was when awakened by a subdued but angry altercation between Annabel and Ernest at the head of the stairs outside my door. I could distinguish also the sound of men moving stealthily on the road. One of the most remarkable features of the place was the dead stillness of the nights, so that I was not thoroughly aroused by these sounds before I realized what was taking place. I sprang up and dressed hastily, but Ernest, hearing my movements, came into my room angry and excited. He was determined to go and keep his promise to Desbarrat, and I perceived that in his present mood no argument or entreaty would alter his purpose. He was unfortunately such a powerful fellow that an attempt on my part to detain him by force would have been futile. His grievance was that Annabel, after using every art in vain to prevent his going, had declared her intention of going with him, and he in his turn was unable to prevent her.

"So you may as well come too and escort her," he said, "for I shan't have time to take care of her."

He went off then to complete some preparations in his own room, and I went out and found Annabel standing in cloak and cowl upon the landing of the stairs. The moon shone through the big staircase window, and she stood full in its beams, but her face was so white and sad, so fixed in stern determination, that at the

moment I hardly knew that it was she. She turned upon me at once and tersely explained the whole extent of the danger, which was nothing less than that if they hung the old man, Ernest was as likely as not, in his excitement, to be in the thick of the crowd. I urged the necessity of appealing to his parents, but Annabel would not hear of it. Her love for Mrs. Thorold was like the passionate solicitude of a mother for an ailing child; she would risk anything rather than startle her. She was shocked and terrified at the thought of a crime coming so close to them all, but it was clear that she had some plan in her head with regard to Ernest and felt more able to cope with the difficulties of the case than I did, for she made not the slightest answer to my exclamations and arguments. When I had ceased speaking, she silently drew out of her breast a large key and held it so that for a moment its shadow fell clear on the moon-whitened floor; then she replaced it in the folds of her garment. "When we reach the gate to-night," she said, "it will be locked. The men sometimes lock it at night, and put the key in the tool-house." I did not understand the import of this information. It appeared idle to lock a gate that any man could climb; but we had not time to say more, for Ernest came and Annabel led the way out of the house, appearing as anxious as he was to get away from it with all possible secrecy. I went with them, hoping that the men would disperse without violence as they had done before, and determining that, if they attempted to carry out their purpose, there was nothing to do but to hold the boy out of mischief by main force or die in the effort. It was impossible for me to attempt remonstrance with a crowd of men who did not understand the language I spoke.

There was a group of gloomy pine-trees standing on either side of the gate; between these the white light shone in from the moon, which hung in the southern sky over the opposite fields. Old Bossé's house was a little to the west; we could see it from the gate and the ill-omened pile of stones, but we could not see the crowd that was gathered on the road in front of it, from which we heard low, angry tones of dispute. Part of the old wall around our grounds dated back to the time of Indian warfare; it was of rough stone overgrown with moss and lichen. At the gate there was a small chamber built in it, with tiny windows on the road like a sort of rude turret. It had evidently been constructed for purposes

of defence, but was now used by the gardeners to keep their tools in. The gate to the road we found locked as Annabel had foretold.

"They often put the key in the tool-house," she said to Ernest. He appeared to think this probable, for he went into the turret to look for it. This chamber, which they called the "tool-house," had a heavy door which could be fastened on the outside by a large hook. He had no sooner gone in than, quick as thought, she drew to the door and secured it on the outside. I never saw an action more deftly done. The boy was raging like a young lion in his dark prison before I realized what had occurred.

The sense of relief which I experienced at seeing Ernest put beyond the reach of mischief for the time was so great that I could have laughed with delight. I turned to Annabel expecting to see the look of roguish satisfaction which I had so often seen in her eyes, but it was not there. She turned away quite sadly to find out what was going forward on the road. A passing Frenchman was called to the gate, and Annabel stood leaning against the iron bars and questioned him. It seemed that there was a division among the men which was causing the dispute and delay. The Roi family were there in full force, old Roi himself and all his sons. They had led Desbarrat to believe that they came with the same lawless purpose as the rest, but, once on the scene of action, they had drawn themselves up in solid phalanx on the side of law and order. They proposed to search the ground under the stones for the bones of the murdered woman, and, if they were found, to seize old Bossé and deliver him up to the authorities. More than this they refused to do. It now appeared that Desbarrat was not very hopeful of finding the remains of his mother under these stones, for he, at the head of the roughs he had brought with him, was determined to despatch the old man first and seek for the proof of his guilt afterwards. He was the more clamorous to carry out his purpose hastily because a report had got about that old Roi had gone so far as to notify the police at St. Luc, and was even now trying to gain time in the hope of their arrival. Bossé was supposed to be in his house, for they had set a watch around it. That was all we could learn of the state of affairs. It was a curious sight to see this calm, pale-faced girl conversing with the hot-blooded Frenchman, the moonlight falling on their faces, the iron bars of the gate between

them. The night wind came and died in the pines above us, uttering low notes of pain and fear. Ernest kicked the door of his cell like a war-horse when the trumpet sounds.

It seemed likely that the dispute would end in a fight between the two factions, for both parties were alike in their intense excitement. A light was suddenly seen moving in Bossé's house, and the angry murmur of voices in the crowd rose into a low howl of hatred and menace against the miserable old man. There was a movement of Desbarrat's men inside his gate, and the others ran forward to keep them back. Then some one set up a cry calling their attention to a sound in the distance. They all stood silent, listening. The sound appeared to be the noise of horses and wheels coming swiftly over the long, wooden bridge across the river. It was a law that no one was allowed to drive over this bridge quicker than at a walking pace, so that the sound of horses galloping upon it in the dead of night was sufficient to arrest the attention of the maddest among them. There was little doubt, from the first vibration of the unwonted sound, that old Roi had actually sent a messenger to the authorities at St. Luc who was now returning with the police, but the crowd showed no disposition to disperse. They stood their ground, waiting while the galloping horses came nearer and nearer, evidently believing that the force sent would be quite inadequate to the occasion, as indeed it turned out to be. When the vehicle came up it contained only the chief of police, a couple of his men, and the farm-servant who had guided them. But the officer in charge, who was a dapper little fellow, had wits if he had not a force of men. He saw that the men were full of hatred for Bossé and were craving the activity and excitement of doing wrong. He could not make them return home quietly, but when he offered the compromise which Roi had first suggested, of allowing them to search under the stones for the remains of the missing woman, all the roughs except Desbarrat proved willing to comply, for they saw that they could not now carry out their first intention without a struggle of doubtful issue, and the belief that the woman had really been buried there prevailed so strongly in the neighborhood that they set to work with the evident expectation of finding what they sought. He put the most impatient and dangerous of the men to the work, and Desbarrat, deposed from his leadership, sulked, sitting on the fence.

Now that they were working at the stones we could see them clearly from the gate, and, at the window, his form a silhouette against the beams from his candle, we saw the old man grimly watching them. It was no scene for a girl like Annabel to witness, yet she stood there half leaning, half hanging on the upright bars of the gate, which she grasped in her white hands. Her eyes followed each movement of the men with a look of sorrow I could not comprehend.

At last she said, "Poor old man! What suffering could be more intense than to watch the world trying to tear the coverings from one's own past? Whether there is anything under these stones or not, he knows that they will not be content to stop until they have pryed into all his secrets."

"Poor, poor old man," she said again, her eyes filling with tears and her voice breaking. "And yet I wish I could change places with him now."

"Why?" I asked.

"They may take him away or kill him, and I have lived beside him all my life and have never done anything for him."

"You must not allow your feelings to overcome your common sense because you are excited. You cannot believe that you have any personal duty toward this hardened old sinner."

"Who is my neighbor?" she asked simply.

"What could you have done for him?"

"I do not know," she said thoughtfully, "I might have given him one of my guinea-pigs."

Childishness had not vexed me in the sunset light when I had leisure to humor it, but now it was out of place. We were cold and tired. The fate of a man's life hung upon the issues of the hour.

"It seems to me that you are talking nonsense," I said rather sharply. "What good could a guinea-pig do him? If you could have taught him the Commandments, and made him believe in the judgment to come, that would have been something."

"You do not understand me at all," she said in her gentle, deliberate way. "I could not have taught him the Commandments nor about the judgment, because in the bottom of his heart he knows all that well, and because he would not have listened to me. But I do not think he knows what love is, either human or divine. Think what it would be not to have even the conception of love! A new idea will not be silenced; it will work and work in

a man's mind until it has found its relation to all the other ideas that are there — be they few or many — modifying them all. With patience I might have put the idea of love into this old man's mind. I tried once smiling to him when I met him on the road, but he looked so wicked that I was frightened and gave it up. Now perhaps it is too late."

She leaned her cheek against the bar that she held. The heart-broken accent of her words surprised me. "I think you are grieving yourself unnecessarily," I said. "You are kind to every one. You never did him any harm."

"There were two men who were handed down to world-long infamy by the most charitable friend humanity ever had, and that, not because of anything they did, but because they did nothing. Do you know," she asked suddenly, turning her face towards me, "where that 'other side' was, where the priest and the Levite passed in the parable?"

"Do you mean the other side of the road?" I asked, wondering.

"Yes," she said; "but Christ himself must have been standing on that road, because they passed from his right hand to his left, from the sheep to the goats, for it was 'inasmuch as ye did it not.'"

I did not feel impatient with her now, and we stood in silence for a little while. The splendid harvest moon was moving higher over the silent fields, one little train of fleece was round her in the empty sky. The light flooded everything except the pines, which, like morbid souls, wrapped themselves in impenetrable shadow. The Bossé house was white with it, and the highway. The form of the gate was drawn in clear shadow on the white ground at our feet. The wind came again and moaned in the trees, but this time it only brought me a feeling of pleasant contrast, for, if others were unhappy, I was in sweet company.

Ernest had become quiet and was looking and listening through the small windows which opened on the road. Annabel was doing her utmost to control the tears which were still falling silently. Her childlike sorrow, and her womanly effort to conceal it and pretend that she was not weeping, touched me to the heart. I could not bear to see her in such trouble, and I took her slender hands from the bar; they had become cold as the iron itself, and I held them in my own to warm them.

"But, Annabel," I said gently, "the Gospel teaching holds up an ideal which is

intended to be beyond our reach. No man can do his whole duty."

A gleam of amusement shot across her tear-stained face. "It is you that are talking nonsense now," she said sweetly. "Of course, it is no man's duty to do what he cannot."

"I know it appears to be a paradox," I answered, "but nevertheless it is the truth."

"Truth!" she replied scornfully, her frame dilating with a sudden energy, her eyes flashing through her tears. "Truth! Yes, the sort of truth that you and such as you care about—you, who have accepted, without a moment's earnest doubt and investigation, a code of miserable maxims degrading God's truth to the level of your doctrines, and then made a magnificent virtue of verbal accuracy. I do not despise your verbal quibblings. I tell you frankly I will try to be more careful in what I say. But to reverence truth is to try to see beyond the outside of things—to try to see the power that makes them what they are; and if there is any Gospel it means that that power is come within our reach and the ideal duty is *not* impossible to man."

She shook her hands from mine and turned away. Her vehemence startled me. Her tears had been suddenly dried by the fire of her indignation. The storm of feeling with which she had spoken was so entirely unlike anything I had seen in her before that I was filled with surprise and had no wish to speak.

What I might ultimately have said I do not know, for our attention was absorbed by the men. They had begun digging and talking; then they dug in silence; now as they worked they shouted to one another until their shouts blended together and rose into a howl of triumphant hatred more horrible than any sound I have ever heard. It rings in my ears yet, and I shall hear it, when I think of it, until my dying day. There was confusion, and we could not tell in the moving and screaming what they were doing or trying to do. Some one shouted, "*Le meurtrier! Le meurtrier sanguinaire!*" Then the light went out in the house. Several voices tried to make themselves heard, but the howl rose again and drowned everything.

"They have certainly found the poor woman's remains," I said to Annabel.

"Yes," she replied, but she had averted her face from the people and was looking away to the eastern sky. I thought she was praying, and who can estimate the result of such a prayer?

The police officer had not expected this result of the search any more than Desbarrat, but he had shown his wisdom in setting the most lawless of the men to the hard labor. Those who were willing to help him in getting the wretched old man safely to the gaol were still fresh. After some time we saw the crowd gather together in thick fight, and then, swearing, fighting, and struggling, a number of them made their way through the rest, holding Bossé between them. They put him in the vehicle with the policemen. It was drawn up close to us. I saw how meekly the old man stepped into it. His white hair blew about his head; they had not waited to find his hat. Then the Roi brothers held the others back while the police drove away. Gabriel Desbarrat, surprised by this unexpected proof of his stepfather's guilt, was almost beside himself with excited triumph. He had the sense to see that, now that his end was gained, it was better to have the law with him rather than against him, and he made a speech from a post of the fence, stating that he had always agreed with his uncle that the only way to obtain justice was to keep within the limits of the law, and that he had always known that his beloved mother (*sa mère bien aimée*) had been buried in that particular spot.

While Desbarrat was still shouting some of the men were engaged in reverently making a rude fence round the grave of the uncovered skeleton. Ernest again demanded to be let out, but this time rather more politely. Like most passionate men, he could not keep his anger long. Annabel went close to the door to hear what he said.

"If you will promise to kiss and make it up, I'll let you out," she said.

"I shan't."

"Very well," she said cheerfully, and came away from the door again.

This colloquy was repeated in almost exactly the same form several times, but finally, finding that she would abate nothing of her demand, Ernest gave the required promise. So she let him out, and they kissed and made it up very prettily. Then he went out on the road to talk with the men. In a few minutes he came back, his own wrongs quite forgotten in the excitement of the event.

"Well, at any rate," he said, rubbing his hands together with an important air, "this just teaches us one thing, doesn't it? It shows that murder will out, doesn't it? Now, Annabel, I hope that you are satisfied that I was right in saying that we

should see justice done, and that remarkable things can happen in real life as well as in fiction."

"Fact," I said, "is often stranger than fiction."

Annabel said nothing, and we went into the house.

#### CHAPTER IV.

I DID not sleep that morning. I lay and listened, first to the retreating footsteps, and then to the pulse of the insect world which beat on in the heart of silence. I thought of the events of the night and of Annabel. I was now convinced that there was a depth of thought and feeling in her nature which I had not hitherto suspected, but both the thought and the feeling were sadly undisciplined. I had caught a glimpse of latent passion in the heart of the girl I loved — how strong I did not know or how far uncontrolled — and I felt bewildered like a man who, walking in a pleasant land, feels the rumble of volcanic surges beneath his feet. The dawn in swelling robes of pearly light came floating over the green earth, and the birds, after tuning their pipes for a little, sang out in full chorus. The noise of their glad overture seemed to throb through the temple of the morning and resound again from its roof and walls.

In the night I had said fact was stranger than fiction, and Annabel repeated my remark to me in the morning, when at breakfast the rumor reached us that the broken skeleton which had been found had proved in the daylight to be that of a calf. Even Ernest, who had been out, could not deny the fact. The authorities had been over from St. Luc to examine the bones; but they said that Bossé would be detained some time, for further investigation.

Mr. and Mrs. Thorold, it seemed, had actually spent the night undisturbed. The latter had not yet risen; the former now questioned us with interest. Annabel gave him a satirical and highly colored account of the whole affair in which Ernest's name figured. His father was extremely shocked.

"Ernest!" he exclaimed, "is it possible?"

The boy interrupted him. "Can't you see, sir, that Annabel is inventing every word of it?"

Mr. Thorold satisfied himself by a glance at the girl, and then, because he had been angry with Ernest, chid Annabel for her nonsense. He said it was too serious a matter for a joke.

Of course for a week we talked of

nothing but old Bossé's affairs. Gossip averred that the calf had been a pet calf. The old dames of the neighborhood, who rather pitied Bossé, suddenly remembered the story of its life and death with a minuteness and variation of detail which were most surprising. In speaking to one of them, Annabel said with a sympathetic shake of her head, "And perhaps it had been like a friend to him for many years." "Sans doute," replied the old woman, with a pious sigh. The favor of the populace was gradually turning towards old Bossé, and, suspecting themselves to have done him injustice, they tried in their rough way to expiate the sin by being now unjust to Gabriel Desbarrat. His last excited and boastful speech on the night of the riot was remembered against him. One boy, meeting Desbarrat, went so far as to point with his thumb toward the uncovered bones of the calf and exclaim, "*Sa mère bien aimée.*" Desbarrat thrashed the boy till he roared again. The boy was the son of a widow, and one might therefore have supposed that there would be no one to take his part. Not so thought the widow, who turned a bucket of sour milk over Desbarrat the next time he passed under her window, remarking as she did so, in rich nasal *patois*, that she thus put it to its right purpose, for it was meant for a pig. No one sued the widow at law for damages.

While the little waves of popular feeling were thus quieting themselves in the neighborhood I found myself in the last month of my visit, and I knew that if I was going to make love to Annabel it was time to begin; yet one by one the days passed in the tranquil weather and I found the purpose of my mind still unsettled with regard to her. I loved her in a certain way, it was true, and at times I could not withhold myself from striving by word and action to win her love, but my better judgment refused to sanction the impulse of my heart and remained in suspense. Her reserve of manner, however, soon broke down before the evidences of my regard, and one day she informed me with perfect candor that she had formerly disliked me, but, having gradually learned to see the good points in my character, she was now willing to become my friend. This declaration once made there was something most charming and original in the openness with which she showed her friendship for me. The pleasure of such a friendship was evidently novel and interesting to her, and, never having learned to see the safety that lies in conventionali-



ties, she quite frankly sought opportunities for conversation, and sometimes did so when I should have thought it wiser to have held aloof. Thus, with mutual pleasure, though not without misgivings on my side, we drifted into intimate companionship. I think if I had been quite certain that this friendship betokened love on her part I could not have refrained at that time from opening my heart to her, but she would not give me this assurance, and Procrastination, that monstrous thief of summer days, whispered to me to put off speaking to her yet awhile, and I listened to his advice.

About three weeks after our old neighbor had been driven handcuffed to gaol in the dead of night, he walked quietly back one sunny morning with a small blue bundle slung, French fashion, over his shoulder. It was a comfortless enough home-coming, for his house had stood open to wind and weather since he had left it, and if it contained any recesses to him sacred, they had been profaned by the common gaze. His dog was dead, his chickens could hardly welcome him, and humanity, when forced to walk upon the road on which he lived, passed by on the other side. This old man was neither justified nor condemned, for, while the authorities could find no proof of the murder, all their enquiries had failed to bring testimony with regard to the missing woman. But, although the neighbors still feared and disliked him, the reaction of feeling which had set in against Desbarrat caused many to proclaim their belief in his innocence.

"It is extraordinary," said Annabel, "how averse the ordinary mind is to saying, 'I do not know.' If it cannot hold one opinion it will hold another, and the one is usually as groundless as the other. Opinion is a sort of corset in which foolishness props itself up; wisdom has enough backbone to stand without it."

That day I met Annabel on the road with a loaf of buckwheat bread in her hand and her own terrier pup in her arms. She would not tell me where she was going, but I knew well enough, and thinking such visits hardly safe, I purposely mentioned it at the dinner-table.

Mr. Thorold said, "Do you mean to say, Annabel, that you are so imprudent as to visit that ill-favored old villain?"

"No, dear uncle, I did not mean to say anything about it."

"You must be prudent," he said more mildly.

Ernest and I both urged that Annabel had not learned what prudence was.

"I have," she said.

"You should never contradict those who are wiser than yourself," said Ernest.

"I never do," she replied gently, and under this concise reproof we were forced to be silent.

Gabriel Desbarrat disappeared, and it was rumored that he had gone back to New York, although his business there, of which he boasted, was now supposed to be more visionary than the ghostly vision which had sent him to St. Luc.

"At least," said Ernest, "he will break pretty Thérèse's heart."

"She has an excellent constitution," said Annabel, "which is the main point in a love affair. I fear she will not even look pale and thin."

The next morning, as we passed on the road, we saw pretty Thérèse again tending her flowers alone. If she was sad, as she told us with simplicity she was, there was no trace of it upon her beautiful face.

I finished the portrait, and the time of my visit was drawing to a close. All around us the harvest was gathered in; the blue-winged bird that heralds the Canadian autumn was flitting, flitting everywhere about the land, and the azure aster blossomed round the yellow stubble fields. Those last weeks were all pure joy when I could be at Annabel's side, and yet I never asked her to be my wife. It is hard for me to explain why I did not. She was a girl of earnest thought and heavenly desires. I admire wit in a woman and I admired Annabel; but for a wife I should be content with a more ordinary mind, perhaps even with more humble aspirations. No man wishes to be constantly surprised by his wife's theories or to feel that at any moment he may become the victim of her love of fun. If I could have had proof that she loved me I should have married her, but it was as hard to bring Annabel's feeling to the test as it is to catch a butterfly; as often as I tried to lead her to show me her heart her light wit would flash from that subject to some other, like those gleams of color that glance from the flower on which you hope they will rest to alight and glitter upon some happy blossom half a field away. At last, weary of the attempt, I tried to give her some warning of my own cold-heartedness.

One afternoon, when the heat of the day was over, I went out of the drawing-room to enjoy the cool air that came with the

sunset. I found Annabel standing outside the front door, leaning against its stonework and idly surveying the beauty of the evening. The sun had gone down behind the house, so that the lawn at our feet was in shadow. The flowers about us were closing their petals, and the creeper upon the house shook out its long tendrils in the evening breeze. One of them blew over Annabel's shoulder as she stood, and she put up her hand to caress its leaves, holding it there upon her breast. The trees were thick and heavy at our right, but across the lawn in front we saw the fields and sky, and on the other side a single row of feathery poplar-trees made a light, fluttering screen between us and the bending river. We never grew tired of looking at the fields; the house stood upon a slight hillock and we could see them for miles around with their rows of pollard poplar here and there along the fences, and sometimes a piece of bosky pasture land. They were all hues of gold and russet now in the evening light, and beyond them was the forest, and all about the edge of the flat world pink air lay still in level folds under the cloudless blue.

I had something to say to Annabel, but I did not find it at all easy to begin, particularly as she seemed much more interested in looking about her than in talking to me. I had thought that the best way to word my warning would be to express the hope that she would one day be happily married, but it was necessary to find some preface for the expression of such a wish. At last I said, "What sort of society do you have here in the winter? There are some English people in St. Luc, I hear. Do you never meet any men that you like?"

With her head leaning backward against the stone and her eyes still upon the fields she answered me with lazy unconcern. "Oh, yes, there are some English families in St. Luc in winter. They are very good sort of people, sensible, and well educated as far as lesson books go. What they chiefly need is a *soupeon* of general information which might perhaps take away from the utter dullness of their conversation. For instance, this spring Ernest and I went to a picnic there. After luncheon I perceived that the damsels and swains had been equally matched in numbers, and that it was their conception of happiness that each couple should walk about together. Ernest deserted me for a girl in blue, and I found myself sitting by the broken fragments with a man

who was urging me to walk with him; so I remarked, a little crossly, 'I suppose in Rome we must do as the Romans do.' He looked at me inquiringly for a minute and then said earnestly, 'How do the Romans do?' And therein was my ignorance exposed, not his; for I am sure I do not know how the Romans do. I have regretted ever since that I did not reply, 'Very well, I thank you.' That would have so completely confused the poor young man."

Her pretty lips curled over these last words with a smile of inward delight at the picture they suggested, and my face grew suddenly hot at the thought of my first adventure in conversation with her at the dinner-table.

"You ought not to enjoy making people uncomfortable in that way," I said. "Why did you not walk with him pleasantly? What was he like?"

"Something like you," said Annabel idly; "not very tall, with a rather well-cut chin. They had some glees afterwards, and he sang a little out of tune, just as you do."

I saw that she was in her most perverse mood. I believe by some subtle sympathy she divined what I had come to say. I said, "I suppose I must take your words as a proof of your sisterly friendship for me, otherwise they are hardly polite."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said, turning her wonderful eyes to me with a look of innocent pleading. "I did not mean to be rude; I really was not thinking what I said, I was only telling you what he was like."

Had this been true it certainly would not have detracted from the sting of her words, but I knew too well that the innocence was feigned. "If he was at all like me, he must have been uninteresting indeed," I said dryly; "perhaps you will kindly favor me with a list of your requirements in a young man."

"Six feet two — and a beard — musical — and a Christian," replied Annabel, telling off the four items upon her fingers with a moment's pause for reflection before each.

If I had expected any answer to my question it was a further apology, and I was so much astonished by her prompt category that I stood silent. Annabel again leaned lazily back against the stone and watched the changes of the evening light. If I had been certain that by making a declaration of love I could have caused her to stand there abashed before

me with eyes cast down, I think I would have risked my life's happiness to have had the power at that moment to put her to confusion; but I felt impotent to touch her perfect self-command. I could not even fancy Annabel blushing with down-cast looks. It was one of her faults that she constantly looked before her out of her big grey eyes, and I sometimes suspected that when she least appeared to be observing what she saw she was observing most. It was some time before I spoke again, and in the silence my anger grew more calm.

"Even though I do not possess your list of virtues, Annabel, except perhaps the last, I know that you have allowed me to regard you with brotherly interest, and —"

"Do look at that cow in our meadow!" she interrupted. "Did you ever see anything so funny as the way it and its shadow are walking along? I beg your pardon, go on with what you were saying."

"I was only going to say that I may not have a chance of talking to you alone again, and when I am gone I shall hope soon to hear that you are comfortably settled in a home of your own. I hope you will always look back to our friendship with pleasure, and believe that although I may sometimes have seemed to you inconsiderate I have not consulted my own pleasure so much as I have endeavored earnestly to consider both your highest welfare and my own."

She looked at me with eyes wide open in unaffected astonishment. I am sure that this time her surprise was real, although I cannot tell exactly what caused it. She was startled at last out of her indifference and stood facing me, apparently thinking of what I had said. Then suddenly, as some thought struck her, the flame of an internal fire leaped to her cheeks and she turned to me with earnest eyes. "Richard, believe me, the human power of thought and calculation is a very fallible thing, while when a man is a good man and trying to do right, his impulses are often sent from God."

When she had said this she left me and went into the house. Dear girl! There was a sort of divine pity in her eyes as she spoke. Was it for me, or for herself, or both? If she loved me this was the one protest which she made against the course I had taken, the one word of pleading that she uttered for her own happiness. Neither by look nor sign did she refer to the subject again, but when I went in to

dinner that night she was not there. She had gone to her room with a headache, they said. It was the only evening in the three months that we spent without her, and it was, as she had said of the society of St. Luc, unutterably dull.

It was the shooting season and it had become Annabel's business to go with Ernest up the river before breakfast and paddle his canoe for him. One morning I went with them, and I have a happy recollection of a reedy river and a crimson dawn, of wild duck seen for a moment against the sky and then lost in the noise and smoke of the gun. It was real work this canoeing, requiring quickness of perception and control of nerve; yet Ernest would not let me touch the paddle when he could get Annabel to work for him. It required absolute silence, too; and Annabel could perceive and be silent.

I did not go with them often, and it was after they had been out together one morning that I said good-bye and started for my home-bound ship. In the last days the thought of the parting scene with Annabel haunted me like a nightmare. I felt that when our eyes should meet for the last time I could not fail to read her inmost soul, and, like a veritable coward, I feared I knew not what. Oddly enough, I nearly started without saying good-bye to her at all, for she and Ernest did not return to breakfast. I had taken leave of Mrs. Thorold and the trap was at the door with my portmanteau upon it before they came from the river. I stood upon the threshold talking to a young gardener who was working among the flowers when they came racing over the lawn, Ernest with his gun, and Annabel in her loose boating frock.

"You have missed your breakfast," I said.

"Never mind," said Annabel, "you only had duck. We are so tired of eating duck." And this indeed I felt to be the sentiment of us all.

"I hope you have a parting blessing for me, now you have come?" I said.

"We are so sorry you are going," she said, still breathless. "We ran all the way from the river to be in time to say good-bye to you. I hope you will have a very pleasant voyage."

"Yes, while we were out we decided that on the whole you were a thoroughly good fellow," said Ernest. "We shouldn't mind if you came back."

"Indeed, we shall miss you," said Annabel, clasping her hands. "I shall miss

you very much indeed. I hope you will come back to see us."

I was a little overwhelmed by this unexpected expression of regard from them both. "No," I said gravely, "I do not expect to be able to come back."

"Have you some luncheon?" asked Annabel instantly. "We should not mind in the slightest giving you half-a-dozen couple of roast duck." She flew off for some luncheon for me and, with the pertinacity which women have about such matters, insisted on putting it into my hand-bag. I did not want it, but I enjoyed her care and attention.

"Good-bye, Annabel," I said, pressing her hand.

"Good-bye," she said, returning my glance with her sweetest smile.

When we drove away they waved their hands to us. When we looked back from the gate they were pretending to weep. The horses walked up the road, and I watched this dramatic performance for a little way, then some trees hid the house from us. When we saw them again they were occupied with something else. Ernest and the gardener were stooping down to examine something on the ground. Annabel was tiptoe upon an inverted flower-pot, uplifting a small watering-can which she was carefully upsetting over Ernest as she held back her skirts with the other hand. Among her flowers, with the old house for a background, for a moment we saw her, graceful in every line, a very mischief incarnate. Then we drove out of sight.

"You see they have forgotten our very existence already," said Mr. Thorold.

But I was not so sure. I think Annabel knew very well that we should see them from that gap in the trees, and I could not but confess that she had baffled my solicitude to the last.

Sweet Annabel! I often think of her. I think a man in this life is at certain times given opportunities by which, if he grasp them, he may rise to be something higher than he has been before. In some moments I feel sadly that in slighting Annabel's affection and friendship, I have slighted such an opportunity which the heavenly power will not hold out to me again. For the most part, however, I believe I did wisely in leaving her. I sometimes doubt if I ever really understood her character, and it may be that she never once thought of me in the way of love. As to that perhaps I am not the best judge.

L. DOUGALL.

From The Speaker.

#### PUNCH'S UNDERSTUDY.

THE first-class smoking carriage was the emptiest in the whole train, and even this was hot to suffocation, because my only companion denied me more than an inch of open window. His chest, he explained curtly, was "susceptible." As we crawled westward through the glaring country, the sun's rays beat on the carriage roof till I seemed to be crushed under an anvil, counting the strokes. I had dropped my book and was staring listlessly out of window. At the other end of the compartment my fellow-passenger had pulled down all the blinds and hidden his face behind the *Western Morning News*. He was a red-faced, choleric little man of about sixty, with a salient stomach, a prodigious nose to which he carried snuff about once in two minutes, and a marked deformity of the shoulders. For comfort—and also, perhaps, to hide this hump—he rested his back in the angle by the window. He wore a black alpaca coat, a high stock, white waistcoat, and trousers of shepherd's plaid. On no definite grounds I guessed him to be a lawyer and unmarried.

Just before entering the station at Lostwithiel, our train passed between the white gates of a level crossing. A moment before I had caught sight of the "George" drooping from the church spire, and at the crossing I saw it was regatta-day in the little town. The road was full of people and lined with sweet-standings; and by the near end of the bridge a Punch and Judy show was just closing a performance. The orchestra had unloosed his drum and fallen to mopping the back of his neck with the red handkerchief that had previously bound the panpipes to his chin. A crowd hung around, and among it I noted several men and women in black, hideous blots in the pervading sunshine.

The station platform was thronged as we drew up, and it was clear at once that all the carriages in the train would be besieged without regard to class. By some chance, however, we were disregarded, and escape seemed likely till the very last moment. The guard's whistle was between his lips when I heard a shout, then one or two feminine screams, and a party of seven or eight came tearing out of the booking office. Every one of them was dressed in complete black; they were, in fact, the people I had seen staring at the Punch and Judy show.

A moment after, the door of our com-

partment opened, and we were invaded. They tumbled in over my legs, panting, laughing, exclaiming, calling to each other to hurry—an old man, two youths, four middle-aged women, and a little girl about four years old. My choleric fellow-passenger leapt up, choking with wrath, and shouted to the guard. But the door was slammed on his indignation, and we moved off. He sat back, purple above his stock, rescued his malacca walking-stick from under the coat-tails of a subsiding youth, stuck it upright between his knees, and glared around at the intruders. They were still possessed with excitement over their narrow escape, and unconscious of offence. One of the women dropped into the corner seat and took the little girl on her lap. The child's dusty boots rubbed against the old gentleman's trousers. He shifted his position, grunted, and took snuff furiously.

"That was nibby-jibby," the old man of the party observed, while his eye wandered round for a seat.

"I thought I should ha' died," said a robust woman, with a wart on her cheek and a yard of crape hanging from her bonnet. "Can't 'ee find nowhere to sit, uncle?"

"Reckon I must make shift 'pon your lap, Susannah." This was said with a chuckle, and the woman tittered. "What new-fangled game be this o' the Great Western's? Arms to the seats, I declare. We'll have to sit intimate, my dears."

"Tis first class," another woman announced in an awed whisper. "I saw it 'pon the door. You don't think they'll fine us."

"T all comes of our stoppin' to glare at that Punch an' Judy," the old fellow went on, after I had shown them how to turn back the arm-rests and they were settled in something like comfort. "But I never *could* refrain from that antic—tho' I feels condemned, too, in a way—an' poor Thomas laid in earth no later than eleven this mornin'. But in the midst of life we are in death."

"I don't remember a more successful buryin'," said the woman with the wart.

"That was part luck, you see; it bein' regatta-day an' the fun o' the fair not properly begun. I saw a lot at the cemetery I didn' know by face, an' I reckon they was mostly excursionists that caught sight of a funeral an' followed it, to fill up the time."

"Well, it all added."

"Oh, aye; Thomas was beautifully interred."

The heat in the carriage by this time was hardly more overpowering than the smell of crape, broad-cloth, and camphor. The youth who had wedged himself next to me carried a large packet of "fairing," which he had bought at one of the sweet-stalls. He began to insert it into his side pocket, and in his struggles drove an elbow sharply into my ribs. I shifted my position a little.

"Tom's wife would ha' felt it a source o' pride, had she lived."

But I ceased to listen; for in moving I had happened to glance at the further end of the carriage, and there my attention was arrested by a curious little piece of pantomime. The little girl—a dark-eyed, intelligent child, whose pallor was emphasized by the crape which smothered her—was looking very closely at the old gentleman with the hump—staring at him hard, in fact. He, on the other hand, was leaning forward with both hands on the knob of his malacca, his eyes bent on the floor and his mouth squared to the surliest expression. He seemed quite unconscious of her scrutiny, and was tapping one foot impatiently on the floor.

After a minute I was surprised to see her lean forward and touch him gently on the knee.

He took no notice beyond shuffling about a little and uttering a slight growl. The woman who held her put out an arm and drew back the child's hand, reprovingly. The child paid no heed to this, but continued to stare. Then in another two minutes she again bent forward and tapped the old gentleman's knee.

This time she fetched a louder growl from him and an irascible glare. Not in the least daunted she took hold of his malacca and shook it to and fro in her small hand.

"I wish to heavens, madam, you'd keep your child to yourself!"

"For shame, Annie!" whispered the poor woman, cowed by his look.

But again Annie paid no heed. Instead, she pushed the malacca towards the old gentleman, saying:—

"Please, sir, will 'ee warm Mister Barrabel wi' this?"

He moved uneasily and looked harshly at her without answering. "For shame, Annie!" the woman murmured a second time; but I saw her lean back and a tear started and rolled down her cheek.

"If you please, sir," repeated Annie, "will 'ee warm Mister Barrabel wi' this?"

The old gentleman stared round the carriage. In his eyes you could read the



question, "What in the devil's name does the child mean?" The robust woman read it there and answered him huskily:—

"Poor mite, she's buried her father this mornin'; an' Mister Barrabel is the coffin-maker, an' nailed en down."

"Now," said Annie, this time eagerly, "will 'ee warm him, same as the big doll did just now?"

Luckily the old gentleman did not understand this last allusion. He had not seen the group around the Punch and Judy show; nor, if he had, is it likely he would have guessed the train of thought in the child's mind. But to me, as I looked at my fellow-passenger's nose and the deformity of his shoulders, and remembered how Punch treats the undertaker in the immortal drama, it was all plain enough. I glanced at the child's companions. There was nothing in their faces to show that they took the allusion. And the next minute I was glad to think that I alone knew what had prompted Annie's speech.

For the next minute, with a beautiful change on his face, the old gentleman had taken the child on his knee and was talking to her as I dare say he had never talked before.

"Are you her mother?" he asked, looking up suddenly and addressing the woman opposite.

"Her mother's been dead these two year'. I'm her aunt, an' I'm takin' her home to rear 'long wi' my own childer."

He was bending over Annie, and had resumed his chat. It was all nonsense—something about the silver knob of his malacca—but it took hold of the child's fancy and comforted her. At the next station I had to alight, for it was the end of my journey. But looking back into the carriage as I shut the door, I saw Annie bending forward over the walking-stick and following the pattern of its silver-work with her small finger. Her face was turned from the old gentleman's, and behind her little black hat his eyes were glistening. Q.

THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE AND ITS TREASURES. — How did the Comédie obtain all their works? From letters preserved in the archives we shall learn the secret. Caffieri, we find, estimated the terra-cottas of La Fontaine and Quinault at twenty-five louis each, and his marble busts at three thousand francs each, but the comedians did not pay in money. In 1773 Piron died; Caffieri conceived the idea of making the bust of that author for the Comédie, and asked his friend De Belloy to make terms with the comedians. The negotiations took place by correspondence, and here is the first letter from De Belloy to the actor Molé: "Mon cher Molé, — Caffieri offre aux comédiens d'exécuter le buste en marbre de Piron, à la seule condition de ses entrées en tout temps pendant sa vie. — DE BELLOY." The comedians accepted the offer and placed Caffieri on the free list for life, and henceforward in exchange for each bust in marble they gave the sculptor a free pass for his lifetime, with the right of transferring it to another person. Thus the comedians adorned their green-room without any outlay, and Caffieri received indirectly payment for busts to make which interested him, but which he would doubtless have found difficulty in disposing of otherwise. The price of a life entrance at the Comédie Française was reckoned at three thousand francs. A private individual who wished to purchase such an entrance had the advantage of credit and payment by instalments in dealing with Caffieri rather than with the Comédie directly. Indeed, the sculptor seems to have amused himself by speculating with these life en-

trances, and he did not always get the best of the bargain, as we may see from his correspondence, published by M. Jules Guiffrey in his excellent volume, "*Les Caffieri Sculpteurs et Fondateurs-ciseleurs*" (Paris, 1877). The example of Caffieri was followed by other artists as soon as it became known. In March, 1778, Houdon offered a marble bust of Voltaire in exchange for a life entrance. Pajou, Foucou, Boizot, and Moret treated on the same terms for the busts of Dufresny, Dancourt, Racine, and Regnard, and so from year to year the number of works of art increased. In 1780 Madame Duvivier, niece and heiress of Voltaire, gave to the Comédie the pearl of its collection, that superb marble statue of Houdon, which is the glory of the public *foyer*. Magazine of Art.

TENNYSON'S PENSIONS. — Lord Tennyson has often been censured for continuing to take the pension of £200 which he received now nearly forty years ago. It ought to be known, however, says a London correspondent, that for many years the poet laureate has derived no personal advantage from the pension. He has given the whole of it for the relief of authors in distress. He has, in fact, constituted himself the almoner of a fund of £200 a year, and has used it — no doubt with judgment and care — to relieve the necessities of authors. If he relinquished the pension it would not be conferred on another less prosperous writer. Its abandonment would merely save the State £200 a year, and Lord Tennyson thinks that the money may be well employed in relieving the distress of men of letters.